STREET SPIRIT

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JUSTICE NEWS & HOMELESS BLUES IN THE BAY AREA

Feminist Legends and Icons of Resistance

"We are reclaiming our history—remembering all those founding mothers, all those women who kept the movement going without credit for so long, all the contributions we women have made and undervalued." — Shelley Douglass

by Terry Messman

At the dawn of the decades-long confrontation with the Trident nuclear submarine, what Shelley Douglass remembers most clearly is the physical and emotional exhaustion that had already overwhelmed the tiny group of peace activists who would soon launch a campaign against the most lethal weapons system in history.

One day, out of the blue, Trident missile designer Robert Aldridge showed up at the doorstep of Shelley and Jim Douglass bearing an unexpected — and unwelcome — call to renewed resistance to the arms race. It could not have come at a more difficult time for the activists who formed the Pacific Life Community and the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action.

They were still suffering burn-out and fatigue from years of stormy antiwar protests, police repression, multiple arrests, trials that dragged on for years and long jail sentences. Relationships had broken apart, families had been separated by jail bars, and many were overloaded with anguish from a war that never seemed to end.

Now, they were once again being called into another colossal struggle against impossible odds — a showdown with a nuclear leviathan.

Those who had endured such heavy costs realized that if they were to confront the most destructive weapons system of all time, they would have to take better care of one another and build more supportive communities.

Women in the Peace Movement

The many issues involving women's rights and the well-being of children and families were also of vital importance in the earliest days of the anti-nuclear movement in the Pacific Northwest.

From the very beginning, Pacific Life Community and Ground Zero put forth a consistent message about the importance of feminist principles to the larger peace movement. The affinity group formed by Shelley and Jim Douglass was named "Luna" — symbolically honoring the feminine spirit of peacemaking. The Douglasses constantly said that the movement to abolish nuclear weapons had to be an anti-sexist and anti-racist movement.

At the end of the 1960s, a generation of women who had dedicated themselves

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Mary Harris "Mother" Jones. ***"Pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living."***

Youth Spirit Artworks: *More Than a Paintbrush*

It's hard to quantify the value of hope. How do you measure what happens to someone creating art for the first time?

by Carol Denney

The most compelling voices in the studio of Youth Spirit Artworks (YSA) can communicate without making a single sound. They roar out of the canvases and the artwork on the studio walls in powerful shapes and colors. They've transformed ordinary objects such as wooden chairs and tote bags into vibrating declarations of self-expression.

The "Visions of Equality" project's painted wooden doors are powerfully expressive of the individuals behind the paintbrushes, with bold colors and the courage it takes to work large across a space without the opportunity one has to hide in a journal or a sketchbook.

It's all there, a spirit of self-determination and purposeful exploration of color, shapes, patterns, and symbols both personal and universal.

Artist Dre'an Cox's painted door is playful, reflecting a Pokémon theme from video games. Gina Wardlaw's door is a portrait of a strong, regal woman in bright colors looking calmly at the viewer.

Other doors also take the widest view of the theme, almost entirely lining the fences of the spacious, bright backyard area of the YSA studio like bright boat sails in a harbor heading for new worlds.

Youth Spirit Artworks Art Director Victor Mavedzenge's painted door stands among them, testimony to his own deep talent and his MFA Degree from The Slade School of Fine Art in London.

YSA staff members Danielle Gibbins, the program director and youth advocate, and Lia Li, a student from China who is assisting with the entrepreneurship project, remind visitors that the studio's

See **Youth Spirit Artworks** *page 16*

Lia Li displays an "art cart" used by young artists working at Youth Spirit Artworks.

Urban Shield and the Movement to Stop the Militarization of Police in the Bay Area

by John Lindsay-Poland

The use by police of military tactics and equipment in the East Bay is no accident. Federal and local funding and equipment flow to law enforcement throughout the country, and the Bay Area is no exception.

San Francisco applied to the Pentagon to get a wheeled tank, known as a Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle.

Berkeley deployed a SWAT team in full military gear to a residential neighborhood in response to a robbery of $40 from a laundromat.

In the promotional video for the federally funded Urban Shield exercises, simulations of violent confrontations with police commandos are accompanied by dramatic Hollywood music, as if this were a movie for our entertainment.

Urban Shield is a vendor expo for military equipment and a massive exercise for SWAT teams and other agencies, hosted each fall by the Alameda County Sheriff's Department. It's the largest such "tactical exercise" in the country.

Taking place this year on September 11, it involved at least three dozen police SWAT teams from the Bay Area, as well as from other states and nations. The exercise is funded by grants from the Department of Homeland Security as part of the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), a national program of more than $500 million a year.

This year, the large-scale scenarios included a terrorist attack on a bicycle tunnel in Marin County, an explosion at Levi's Stadium in Sunnyvale (where the Super Bowl will be played next year), and a hostage situation at the Pebble Beach golf tournament in Monterey County. SWAT teams also competed for 48 hours straight in dozens of other "tactical [i.e. militarized] scenarios."

In addition, Urban Shield seeks to prepare police, fire and medical personnel for non-criminal emergencies, such as the collapse of buildings and rail and ferry boat accidents. But Urban Shield's SWAT teams and scenarios of militarized policing are more numerous than all fire, medical and explosive disposal teams and exercises combined.

While most SWAT teams are from the Bay Area, they have come from as far as Israel, Bahrain, Qatar, Brazil, Guam, South Korea and Singapore.

The emphasis on SWAT teams as the response to emergencies — including natural disasters — as well as the exclusive focus on worst-case violent scenarios, obscures and diminishes resources for responding to the ordinary emergencies community members face every day: inaccessible housing and medical care, militarized and underfunded schools, racist violence and violence against women, fossil-fuel dependent and expensive transportation, food insecurity, etc.

It also reinforces an attitude that police are at war in their own communities, with people of color, homeless, poor and mentally disabled persons bearing the brunt.

For most operations of SWAT teams are not in response to emergencies. According to a study by the American Civil Liberties Union, 79 percent of SWAT team deployments in 2011-2012 were to serve search warrants, mostly for drugs. More than half the people impacted by SWAT raids — where the race of individuals was known — were African Americans.

At Urban Shield's vendor expo, a hundred companies sell military grade weapons and surveillance equipment to local police departments. These include companies doing business in the occupied territories of Palestine, such as Motorola, 3M, FLIR, iRobot, Exelis (formerly ITT), and Safariland.

Theater groups occupied street intersections in downtown Oakland in protest of Urban Shield exercises and police repression.

"Humanize Not Militarize: Responses and Resistance to Militarism." **The American Friends Service Committee's poster art exhibit shows the effects of militarism in both foreign and domestic policy, from Urban Shield exercises to Ferguson, Missouri, to Gaza.**

The literature and T-shirts displayed at the vendor event illustrate the thinking offered at Urban Shield. These include American Spartan Apparel, whose T-shirts say things like: "That Which Does Not Kill Me... Should Run" and "Keep Calm and Return Fire" and "Destruction Cometh: And They Shall Seek Peace, and There Shall Be None" — many of them with skulls and crossbones and guns.

How exactly do these sentiments help prepare publicly funded agencies to save lives? As much as people want to say Urban Shield is about saving lives, the focus on guns and death is overwhelming. Moreover, the emergency scenarios in the SWAT exercises do not reward de-escalation of conflict.

Urban Shield is run by a tight network of Sheriff's Department veterans and cronies. The major contractor for the exercise, at least in other cities in past years, was Cytel Group, run by ex-Alameda County Sheriff's Department staff.

Several of the companies vending their wares at the expo have been generous campaign contributors to Sheriff Ahern's re-election bids. 511 Tactical, for example, gave $35,159 worth of contributions to Ahern's campaign in August 2011 and is a "Title-level Sponsor" of Urban Shield. Corizon Health, a "Platinum Sponsor," also profits from health services in prisons, and contributed $55,000 to Ahern's Campaign Committee from 2011 to 2013. That is more than his campaign spent in all of 2014.

Adamson Police Products, a "Triple Diamond Sponsor" of Urban Shield 2015, gave $17,300 to Ahern's campaign committee between 2009 and 2013.

While Urban Shield is funded by a fed-

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Cities Declare Housing Crisis an Emergency

A Column on Human Rights

by Carol Denney

The mayor of Los Angeles and the mayor of Portland both declared states of emergency this September in response to the housing crisis. It sounds good, except for the reality that, as Megan Hustings of the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty puts it, "homelessness has been an emergency for 30 to 40 years."

"If this is what it takes for cities to take action, it is definitely good," Hustings said. "What we're concerned about in Los Angeles is that the declaration of an emergency is being used to open more shelters and put money into law enforcement — which is not the way to go."

What does a declaration of emergency do? It depends on the city in question, but generally speaking, it creates more flexibility. Zoning laws can be waived and funding can be reorganized or acquired from more sources.

In May of 2009, an emergency was declared in Berkeley to close an elementary school for seven days over an outbreak of the flu. In November of 2009, in response to an oil spill in the San Francisco Bay, the governor declared an emergency for all affected communities. And every 14 days in Berkeley, an emergency is declared by the Berkeley City Council so the needle exchange can continue to save the lives of injection drug users.

In most such cases, a city council's approval is required, but most people would not dispute that when thousands of people are living on the street, when there's no state in the union where workers making minimum wage can afford market-rate housing, and when hundreds of thousands of school children are living in cars and trying to do homework in the dark, *we have an emergency*.

Still, the flexibility acquired in a technical state of emergency runs the risk of being misapplied by cities without pragmatic approaches to the housing crisis. Shuffling homeless people through shelters and ticketing people for sitting, sleeping, camping, etc. has yet to be officially recognized as an inappropriate response to the housing crisis by either Portland or Los Angeles, let alone many other cities nationally — despite the Department of Justice's August 2015 official Statement of Interest regarding criminalization of homelessness being "cruel and unusual punishment" and a constitutional violation of the Eighth Amendment.

"While there are not enough shelter beds for people who need them, they are not an answer to homelessness," stated Hustings. "They don't address root causes."

Those who watch in horror as cities nationwide continue adding to an already towering stack of anti-homeless laws would be wise to keep an eye on cities which make grand pronouncements about a state of emergency in housing availability when, in fact, this is old news.

There is nothing in the technical declaration of a state of emergency which requires a city to erase criminalization laws or create badly needed low-income housing. There is nothing in the declaration which obligates a city to recognize how silly it is to fine people for sitting down or sleeping, when they have no money in the first place.

Megan Hustings has a recommendation for all cities with or without an emergency declaration regarding the housing crisis. She said, "A city needs to take a hard look at the local resources that are going into addressing homelessness — look hard at the resources and consider how to increase funding for affordable housing."

A homeless man on a bench at Oakland City Hall Plaza. Multiply this man by a million to see the full dimensions of the housing emergency. Photo credit: Tom Lowe

When countless people are living on the street, when there's no state in the union where workers making minimum wage can afford market-rate housing, and when hundreds of thousands of school children are living in cars and trying to do homework in the dark, *we have an emergency.*

She added that around 500 cities nationwide have inclusionary zoning laws where developers are obligated to reserve a small proportion of units for affordable housing, but the "inclusionary" units are not affordable to low-income people. The Bay Area's inclusionary housing, for instance, creates "inclusionary" housing units only affordable to people in the $80,000 to $100,000 income range — hardly helpful to a minimum-wage worker, who would need to work three full-time jobs to meet such costs.

"We have systematically *disinvested* in affordable housing over the last 30 to 40 years," said Hustings. "We need to invest."

Many housing solutions are obvious: *permanent housing* instead of, or in addition to shelters, legal outdoor spaces to camp for those who prefer it or are traveling through, toilets for those who need them, storage space for people who need storage space, youth and family-specific programs and assistance, etc. The ancillary needs are equally obvious: increased funding to under-funded medical and supportive services so people aren't forced to wait years for help.

When cities move toward practical efforts to address the serious nature of the housing crisis, they'll stop wasting money on criminalizing the attributes of homelessness.

Advocates with a watchful eye will see them get serious about putting an end to the endless and repetitive abuse of police resources chasing poor and vulnerable people out of public spaces, hiring private patrols to harass people who fit a profile, and creating more ways to clog an already overwhelmed court system with cases in which a person's only crime is to be poor.

We have an emergency, all right. But how we respond to that emergency is the real issue.

The Cost of Anti-Homeless Laws Just Went Up $1.9 Billion

HUD just added a high cost to the growing federal pressures against cities that criminalize homelessness.

by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty

On September 18, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) added to the growing federal pressure against criminalization of homelessness by giving incentives for communities to take steps to end criminalization in its $1.9 billion grant program for federal homelessness funding.

HUD's new requirement for federal homelessness funding follows on the heels of the Department of Justice's announcement in August that criminalizing individuals for being homeless is unconstitutional.

Every two years, HUD issues its Notice of Funding Availability to local Continuums of Care (local partnerships of public and private agencies that address homelessness in a given geographic area).

In this year's application for $1.9 billion in federal funds, for the first time HUD is asking Continuums to "describe how they are reducing criminalization of homelessness." In the extremely competitive funding process, Continuums' ability to fully respond to this question can determine up to two points in the funding application, and in many cases could be the difference between receiving funding or not.

"We welcome the federal government's direction of limited tax dollars to the places that will most effectively use that money to address homelessness," said Maria Foscarinis, executive director of the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty.

"The federal government cannot sustainably meet its goals of ending veteran's homelessness this year, chronic homelessness next year, and all homelessness by 2020 if communities continue to waste scarce tax dollars on failed policies that perpetuate homelessness."

The Law Center has published multiple reports on the criminalization of homelessness, including No Safe Place, which showcased the dramatic increase in criminalization in the past few years, as well as case studies of communities engaging in constructive alternatives. The No Safe Place Advocacy Manual shows that when criminalization ordinances are challenged in court, most often they are struck down.

The Law Center has also garnered condemnation of criminalization as cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment by the United Nations' Human Rights Committee, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and Human Rights Council, which made specific recommendations to the federal government to adopt funding incentives to abolish the practice.

This question on the Continuum of Care's funding application is the first step in implementing those recommendations.

"Criminalization of homelessness is already more expensive than providing housing, but those costs — from keeping people in jail to increased emergency room visits — are often hidden," said Eric Tars, senior attorney at the Law Center.

"We hope HUD's new question on their funding application brings at least one cost — the cost of lost federal dollars coming into the community — into full view. When added to the potential costs of losing litigation, there's really no reason for communities to ignore the overwhelming data that shows housing is more effective than criminalization."

"The Law Center is happy to provide technical assistance to communities in reviewing their policies to conform with the Department of Justice brief and HUD incentives," said Tars. "We hope many communities will take advantage of this opportunity to reverse and eliminate these harmful, unconstitutional practices."

The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (www.nlchp.org) is dedicated to using the power of the law to prevent and end homelessness.

Gray Panthers and Tenants Debate Housing Issues in Berkeley

by Lydia Gans

The East Bay Gray Panthers held a meeting on September 23 at the North Berkeley Senior Center to discuss housing issues in Berkeley. The meeting was organized by Eleanor Walden, co-chair of the Residents Council of Redwood Gardens, a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) project in Berkeley for low-income seniors and people with disabilities.

Redwood Gardens was in the news this past year when residents reported numerous problems in dealing with their management company. Tenants faced long delays in correcting hazardous conditions and violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as security threats and disregard for the health and welfare of those who are particularly fragile. Last year, when management planned major renovations, residents objected that they were given virtually no input in the renovation process.

Redwood tenants began to organize and, last spring, they joined the National Association of HUD Tenants (NAHT). In June 2015, Walden and another tenant, Avram Gur Arye, attended the annual NAHT conference in Washington, D.C. What they learned at the conference and the contacts they made motivated them to organize tenants in other HUD projects in the area to fight for proper treatment by the owners of their residences.

NAHT is the national coalition of local tenant organizations of residents living in privately owned or nonprofit housing complexes that receive project-based, Section 8 housing assistance from HUD. This is distinct from the public housing owned by local housing authorities.

Walden and Arye began the meeting by reporting on the NAHT conference. They found that their problems with management are not unique and determined to connect with other projects in the area.

"We learned that tenants have rights," Walden declared.

After their report, Gary Hicks, co-chair of the Redwood Gardens Residents Council, took over running the meeting.

Berkeley City Councilmember Kriss Worthington spoke of the increasing need for really affordable housing and read from a flyer he had written with the message: "Berkeley needs truly *AFFORDABLE* affordable housing funding and policy reform." It is a strong indictment by Worthington directed at members of the Berkeley City Council who act in the interests of developers and wealthy landlords against the needs of people with low or modest incomes. That does not apply to Councilman Jesse Arreguin, he assured the audience.

On the flyer, Worthington lists "23 possible reforms" that are reasonable and could somewhat ameliorate the housing situation. Several are or will be on the City Council agenda. But he couldn't help pointing out that so-called affordable housing that is reserved for people with 50 percent of the East Bay's area median income (AMI) is hardly affordable — and it's more than he earns!

Berkeley needs truly *affordable* housing, Kriss Worthington said. Yet members of the Berkeley City Council often act in the interests of wealthy landlords and developers against the needs of people with low or moderate incomes.

Worthington also talked about the importance of organizing, and of knowing your rights and demanding to be heard. He recalled the message of the disability movement of the 1970s:"NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US!"

HUD representatives Bill Rogina and Robin Thompson were there to answer questions and provide some background on the functions of the agency. Rogina has worked on a national level for many years to produce housing. Thompson works in the management of the housing. She currently manages 80 properties, a considerable workload.

She was asked about an issue that concerns the tenants, not only in Redwood Gardens, but in other projects as well — Walden had mentioned that it came up among delegates at the NAHT conference in D.C. Project owners are doing massive remodeling in the buildings, including in individual residential units, at great inconvenience and often without input from the tenants. This received some publicity in the local press when it was happening in Berkeley last year.

What is worrisome to the tenants is not just the process, but the motivation behind it. The suspicion is that the owners plan to sell the apartment buildings that tenants call home. That is usually what happens when a property is put on the market.

Thompson was mildly reassuring. She used the term "opt out." "We are really the good guys," she said. "It's very rare for an owner to want to opt out, nor are projects owned by nonprofits interested in opting out." But she didn't deny that it has happened.

"What if a tenant wanted or needed to move?" someone asked. She explained that moving out would be a very foolish thing to do. Leaving the project means losing their access to affordable housing. They cannot take the Section 8 voucher with them. Once they move out, the voucher belongs to the unit. "Don't move," she warned. "Don't move!"

Several of the attendees spoke up about the importance of connecting with tenants in other Bay Area projects to share information and take effective action. Someone pointed out that if tenants don't know their rights — or give up insisting on them — they can't expect to solve their problems with the management.

Several people brought up issues in their housing situation and looked forward to meeting with tenants in other HUD projects to compare experiences.

HUD representatives Thompson and Rogina added that any issues addressed to HUD should also be sent to the individual's Congressional representative. HUD is required to respond to Congress within five days. That was a very useful piece of information most people had not been aware of.

After the meeting, Walden expressed satisfaction over the connection with the HUD representatives. "We certainly look forward to working with them," she added. She was pleased with the meeting, saying she saw it as "a foothold for going on to arrange other meetings or forums with HUD tenants in this area."

"Dogtown Redemption" Film Premiere

A scene from the new film, "Dogtown Redemption," a fascinating documentary about the lives of recyclers in the East Bay.

Dogtown Redemption

Film Premiere
Mill Valley Film Festival

Saturday, October 10, 1:45 p.m.
Rafael Film Center
1118 Fourth Street, San Rafael, CA 94901

Thursday, October 15, 5:00 p.m.
Lark Theater
549 Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur, CA 94939

For more information or to buy tickets, visit http://www.mvff.com/ or www.dogtownredemption.com

A Landscape of Life, Love and Loss

"Dogtown Redemption," a new documentary film, arrives in theaters this October. The film is not only the intimate story of recyclers in West Oakland, but a journey through a landscape of love and loss, devotion and addiction, prejudice and poverty.

The film follows the lives of three recyclers: Jason Witt, the titan of recycling; Landon Goodwin, a former minister who struggles with his own fall from grace; and Miss Hayok Kay, the ultimate outsider, formerly a punk rocker from a prominent Korean family, now at the mercy of the elements and predators.

"Dogtown Redemption" humanizes and celebrates those who live in this other America — the America that many of us do not see. That a small recycling center has allowed so many to survive on a daily basis is a minor miracle. A reminder that even in trash there can be life, love and redemption.

Street Spirit

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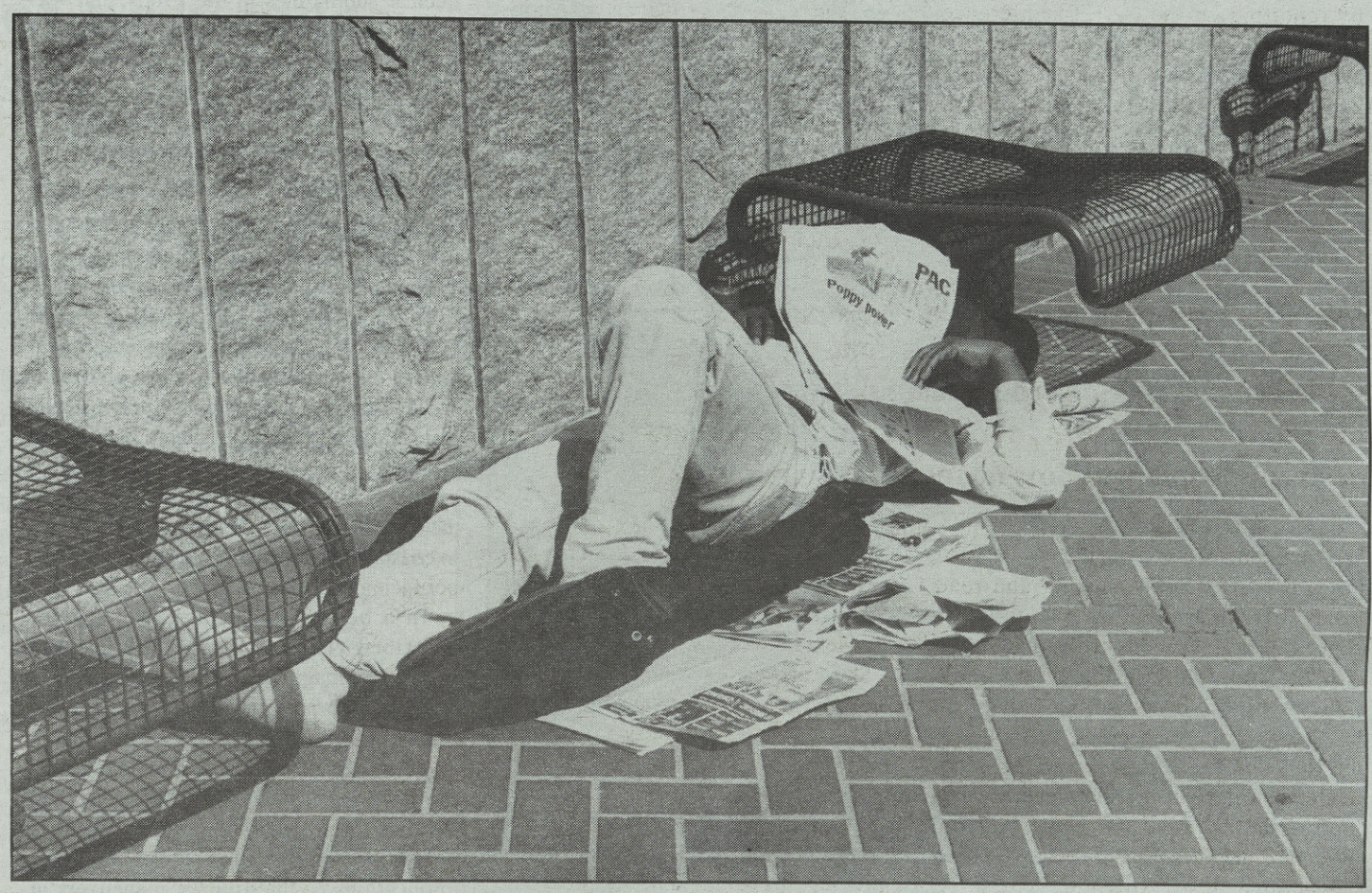
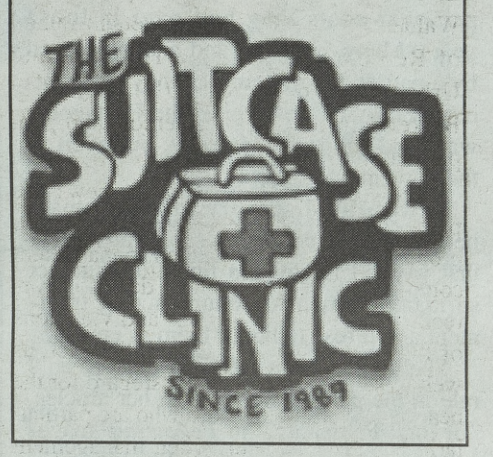
How Homelessness Is Distorted in the Media



Homeless people forced to live on the streets due to the nation's housing crisis may find solace by sleeping under newspapers, but rarely will they find any help in the news reports inside. Corporate media outlets are filled with anti-homeless bias.

STORIES FROM THE SUITCASE CLINIC



by Meriah Barajas

Media has changed our world, to say the least. It has changed the way we access information, the way we communicate, and has especially influenced the way we learn about the world around us. Media's dominance has become so pronounced that its effect on our perceptions has become commonplace in our everyday lives.

Media has definitely allowed us to do things with greater ease. We can communicate with loved ones who previously were separated from us by the barrier of distance, but are now only a Skype call or Facebook message away. We can turn on the news every morning and see what is going on in our neighborhood or around the world.

However, by the same token, we have blown media out of proportion and our reliance on these platforms has led us to a reality where our ideas are no longer our own; they are mass-produced and fed to us. We not only let the media give us information; we now let it tell us how to think about that information. We have let it tell us what to believe and how far to believe it.

We fall prey to the ways in which news outlets negatively frame the information they give, and the ways that social media applications establish the norms of how their users interact with each other, on and off of the apps. We let these platforms distance us from many human aspects of everyday life.

Instagram, Twitter and Facebook now communicate for us. The real-life, organic conversations that used to produce the relationships of our past no longer exist on the same wide scale.

In a generation where media is so prevalent, this tool with which we so easily break down the barriers of distance and time, can have the dangerous effect of building new and different kind of barriers — the kind that drive us farther apart.

The issue of homelessness is almost always inaccurately depicted throughout all media platforms. Stereotypes of homelessness are perpetuated in the media more than anything. News outlets, for one, too often take the humanity out of the information they provide.

Many viewers of the morning news don't think twice when they hear about the thousands of individuals without homes across the country because these individuals are no longer portrayed as people with feelings and ideas. Instead, they are numbers. We see statistics: people turned into numbers because they are easier to compute that way.

Although these numbers might be informative when describing the severity of homelessness, listeners and readers often feel far removed from issues such as the extent of homelessness, poverty and the affordable housing shortage. Numbers are not as impactful because there is no human aspect tied to them to make them relatable.

On all other occasions across news media, we see either a success story of an individual who rose out of homelessness, or a story of a homeless individual who was caught in a situation involving drugs or illegal activity. Here is where the stereotypical perceptions begin. Although stereotypes are not inherently negative, they do become a danger when we begin to base our perceptions on them.

These two kinds of stories do not give viewers or listeners an accurate depiction of what it means to be homeless and the severity of the issue as a systemic problem. We see either very good stories that make us hopeful for humanity, or very negative depictions of people living on the streets who are wrapped up in drugs, so we turn a blind eye when we interact with such people that the news media "warns us" about.

Both of these stereotypical forms blind us to the reality of the issue, and only when we separate ourselves from this view can we begin to see the problem as one that is not an individual issue, but a societal problem, one that needs our constant attention and effort.

Entertainment media has also given us unrealistic ideas of what to expect from individuals struggling with homelessness. If we don't see a success story like Will Smith in the movie, "The Pursuit of Happiness," then often we see a person who follows the stereotype: one who is crazy, on drugs, has raggedy clothes.

These depictions lead us into dangerous territory, and we begin to see homelessness as existing in this neat, little box where people who are dressed nicely and own cars, or pets, or go to college, cannot be homeless. Both of these extremes are not representative of the middle and more common area, the real population that is struggling with homelessness.

Social media may do the most damage yet. Homelessness within social media can often be seen as comical, where "selfies with homeless people" become trends on social media sites. Humans are treated as backdrops instead of individuals with social and cultural capital, ideas and worth.

This is the extent of most peoples' interactions with individuals who are homeless. When we have constant derogatory and dehumanizing portrayals in this kind of mass media, then these ideas become the norm and influence the public perception by perpetuating stereotypes of homelessness.

The mass media and social media are the main sources from which we get our information. This means we learn and absorb a lot from it, whether we admit that or not. Media has become especially pervasive in our generation, and this increase in media consumption has come to shape our social interactions, especially our interactions with homeless populations in our cities.

Constantly being exposed to these stereotypical portrayals of homelessness in the media leads us to fall prey to adopting these problematic perceptions of it, which distances us from the issues that most need our attention and empathy.

We constantly see portrayals of the way homelessness negatively affects our society, but rarely do we hear about how this situation affects those individuals who are struggling with it. Rarely do we hear their voices and stories that make us feel connected to their struggle.

When did we start being okay with the ways the media have desensitized and distanced us from the world around us? We need media platforms that reform the way information is communicated and the way humanity is portrayed.

I am writing through a form of media that is enabling me to use my voice and convey my ideas on the things that I find problematic. This is what media should be: a medium for us to convey the reality of situations that we have become all too complacent with.

So I leave my readers with a couple things to think about. How can we do what is in our power to change public opinion? How can we bring humanity back to a true understanding of an issue — and closer awareness of a people — when we have been so distanced by media stereotypes?

Many viewers of the morning news don't think twice when they hear about the thousands without homes because these individuals are not portrayed as people with feelings and ideas. They are numbers — statistics.

Feminist Icons of Resistance

from page 1

wholeheartedly to the antiwar movement were increasingly aware of the destructive personal costs they had paid in those years. Many felt exploited and oppressed by a patriarchal system that they confronted not only in the form of the Pentagon's wars and military hierarchy, but even in the movement itself.

It was the discovery of an intimate betrayal. How could the same movement that worked for human liberation subject so many women to dehumanizing treatment and refuse to honor them as equals?

Shelley Douglass reflected on women's role in the peace movement in her articles, "Beyond Patriarchy," in *Fellowship* magazine, and "Nonviolence and Feminism" in *Peace Is the Way: Writings on Nonviolence* (ed. Walter Wink, Orbis Books).

"Those times took a heavy toll," she wrote in describing the unequal status and lack of respect that women faced in the movements for peace and civil rights.

It was a demoralizing and intolerable contradiction. As Douglass wrote, "This tragic waste of potential and unconscious dehumanization took place in a movement that only wanted the common good."

"Women were expected to make coffee and provide refreshments while men planned strategy and did resistance actions. Women kept the home-fires burning while men organized, acted, and went to jail. Women bore and raised children and created the homes to which the men returned. Women did leaflets in the thousands, typed letters, licked stamps, marched in demonstrations."

No voice in the movement

Although women did a great deal of the essential work in building social-change movements, they were rarely visible or vocal leaders. That was not their expected role. According to Douglass, even in cities where "women have been the backbone of the peace movement for years," they were not taken seriously and were locked in lower-echelon positions.

"We rarely spoke at demonstrations; our actions did not make us celebrities like the men. When women went to jail, they lacked strong community support. They had no knowledge, by and large, of their historic role in the peace movement."

That last point is especially troubling, given the groundbreaking and heroic roles played by women in movements throughout our nation's history.

Women who objected to this second-class treatment often met only scorn and incomprehension from the male leaders of peace and civil rights groups. But they would not be silenced. Many began realizing that they were not just facing personal problems, but rather widespread inequities caused by gender inequality.

Douglass explained, "We realized that our feelings were not just personal problems; they were political, the results of a system that exploited us all. We were not unique; this oppressive mentality pervaded even the movement itself."

Many women ended up feeling "disillusionment with a movement that fought for other people's freedom while standing upon our backs."

In searching for ways to work for peace while standing up for their own rights and dignity as women, many began looking back at the examples of strong women who had gone before. They learned the stories of legendary women who had overcome powerful systems of oppression to become heroes of the resistance.

Douglass explained how crucial it is to retrieve the history of women who were icons of resistance and liberation. "We are reclaiming our history — remembering all those founding mothers, all those women who kept the movement going without credit for so long, all the contributions we women have made and undervalued."

Suffragist leader Alice Paul raises a glass to the voting rights amendment for women.

Ida Wells, a brave advocacy journalist, crusaded against lynching. Photo: Mary Garrity

Reweaving the Web of Life

A highly influential book that explored the interconnections of nonviolence, women's rights and human liberation was Pam McAllister's *Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence*.

McAllister's eye-opening anthology was overflowing with first-hand accounts of feminism on the front lines of the peace and freedom movements, profiles of historic figures who led the struggles for women's rights, and utopian visions of the future of women's quest for liberation.

Her book came out at a crucial historic moment in 1982, just as anti-nuclear movements in the United States and Europe were engaging in massive nonviolent resistance that touched the lives of millions of people. *Reweaving the Web of Life* helped to put the oppression of women at the center of the social-change agenda, and shared the new methods that the women's movement had invented and refined to build strategies for liberation.

McAllister's book made it clear that nonviolence was not only about war and nuclear weapons. It was also about rape and sexual harassment and domestic violence and the economic injustices faced by women in the workplace. It was about the centuries of discrimination women had endured in every country in the world.

And, in a breathtaking leap, nonviolence was also about compassion for all living beings — trans-species solidarity with whales slaughtered by the whaling industry, birds decimated by pollution and irreplaceable animal species facing extinction.

McAllister's own mentor was Barbara Deming, a longtime activist in the peace and women's movements. Deming, an insightful theorist of nonviolent social change, was the author of *Prison Notes* and *We Are All Part of One Another: A Barbara Deming Reader*.

Deming demonstrated against Polaris nuclear submarines in the 1960s, and was jailed for protesting atomic testing at the Atomic Energy Commission. She marched in civil rights demonstrations in Alabama and Georgia, and marched in the Nashville to Washington, D.C., Walk for Peace.

Far-Sighted View of Nonviolence

Deming helped McAllister understand the "vital link between feminism and nonviolence." And Deming's vision of nonviolence extended far beyond peace activism to include the entire ecological web of connections that sustains all life.

This far-sighted vision of nonviolence reached up into the skies where high-flying bombers target defenseless civilians, and extended down to the earth below where the web of life includes herons and cranes in coastal waterways and a next-door neighbor facing domestic violence.

In a beautiful passage, McAllister described visiting Deming at home and hearing the magnitude of her compassion.

"She embraces the whole spectrum of life with unfragmented concern — from love for the Great White Heron who haunts the quiet canal in front of her house and concern for the endangered snails in a Florida stream, to concern about the global implications of the military maneuvers at Key West and the urgency of offering asylum to a battered neighbor."

In "How Feminism Changed the Peace Movement," Caroline Wildflower, an anti-nuclear activist and Catholic Worker, described her painful experiences in well-known peace groups that dehumanized women by relegating them to subservient roles and secretarial chores. Things changed for the better in the mid-1970s, when she got involved in the Pacific Life Community and Ground Zero.

She found a new atmosphere where women's involvement was respected and encouraged. The Pacific Life Community intentionally included feminist principles in its core values, rejected a hierarchical structure and made all decisions by consensus.

"Each person's ideas were considered important — women's and men's," wrote Wildflower, and "feminism was talked about as an integral part of the strategy."

Women became leading speakers and writers in the Pacific Life Community. After she took the remarkable step of going to jail for resisting nuclear weapons while she was pregnant, Wildflower herself became a speaker and writer, writing about her arrest for *Fellowship* magazine.

Ground Zero was "dedicated to feminism" and to a group process with collective leadership, Wildflower wrote. "Our feminism permeates all aspects of life and makes a difference for everyone."

"Now that we have made these big changes, women are not constantly hurt and put down and devalued in the peace movement. We have successfully created a situation where we live the revolution now, where women and men are respected for their talents and potential."

Reweaving the Web of Life enshrined the courage and leadership of women who fought for human liberation. McAllister's book showed that women were an essential part of virtually every social-change movement in our nation's history, from the Underground Railroad to labor union organizing, from the civil rights movement to antiwar resistance, and from defense of the environment to the struggle for women's rights and gay rights.

Today's social-change movements can be strengthened by learning from these historic movements that overcame seemingly all-powerful systems of domination. The imaginations of today's activists can be electrified by the feminist icons and heroes of these resistance movements.

See **Feminist Icons of Resistance** *page 7*

Feminist Icons of Resistance

from page 6

HARRIET TUBMAN

RISKING HER LIFE FOR OTHERS

"Hundreds of miles we traveled onward
Gathering slaves from town to town
Seeking every lost and found
Setting those free that once were bound."
— "Harriet Tubman," composed by Walter Robinson, sung by Holly Near

Harriet Tubman was born into slavery. After she escaped, she risked her freedom again and again, returning to the South to liberate many others still in slavery. She became known as "Moses" for leading her people to freedom by using the secretive network of escape routes and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad.

Slaveowners posted bounties on her head for helping fugitives escape the cruel and brutal system of slavery.

Tubman was so committed to ending slavery that she helped John Brown recruit people for his raid on Harper's Ferry. Brown, an uncompromising abolitionist who was captured in the raid and later executed, called her "General Tubman" as a sign of profound respect.

Tubman then began working for the Union Army, leading a band of scouts, and also serving as a nurse for wounded soldiers. Tubman led a Union raid on a group of plantations along the Combahee River in South Carolina and liberated an estimated 750 slaves from the plantations.

After the Civil War, Harriet Tubman took part in the struggle to win voting rights for all women, becoming one of the most legendary symbols of freedom and courage in U.S. history.

SOJOURNER TRUTH

"AIN'T I A WOMAN?"

Sojourner Truth was a crusading abolitionist and women's rights activist, and a powerfully persuasive speaker for human rights. She delivered a legendary speech at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in 1851 known as "Ain't I A Woman?"

Truth was born into slavery but escaped to freedom with her baby daughter. She dedicated her life to the abolitionist movement, and advocated political equality for all women, black and white.

After the Civil War, she tried to end the segregation of street cars in Washington, D.C., by riding in cars set aside for white people — an act of civil disobedience 90 years before Rosa Parks was arrested!

Truth also tried to secure land grants from the U.S. government as reparations for former slaves, but Congress refused to honor her basic demand for justice.

Through the causes she championed later in life, Truth showed how all human rights are connected. She spoke out for women's rights, prison reform and voting rights for all. She spoke passionately against the death penalty. Just as she had worked tirelessly to abolish slavery, she now worked to abolish capital punishment.

In June 1881, Sojourner Truth spoke out against the death penalty by telling Michigan's state legislature that it was "murder in cold blood" to put a prisoner to death. She said, "I won't sanction any law in my heart that upholds murder. I am against it! I am against it!"

LUCRETIA MOTT

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND ABOLITION

Many of the women now celebrated as legendary figures of social justice were simultaneously opposed to slavery and to the subjugation of women. Lucretia Mott was a Quaker minister who played leading roles in the abolitionist movement and in the women's rights movement. She always linked women's rights to nonviolence in her speeches and advocacy.

Mott fought ceaselessly for an end to slavery and racial discrimination, for the rights of women and Native Americans, for the rights of workers, and for freedom of speech and religion.

Violent mobs attacked her home because of her abolitionist work, yet she bravely continued to fight slavery even after mobs destroyed the Pennsylvania Hall meeting place built by abolitionists. She worked her entire life for voting rights for women and Black people.

In 1833, Mott organized the Philadelphia Female AntiSlavery Society. In her article, "Nonviolence and Women: The Pioneers," Margaret Hope Bacon called it "the first active political organization of women, the launching pad for the women's rights movement, and the marriage of nonviolence and feminism."

Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were co-organizers of the Seneca Falls Convention in July of 1848, the first public women's rights meeting in the U.S. The women's rights movement was launched with the Seneca Falls Declaration of the Rights of Women, which demanded voting rights for women and declared that men and women are equal.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY AND ELIZABETH CADY STANTON

ARRESTED FOR ILLEGAL VOTING

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were lifelong friends and coworkers. They were indispensable leaders of the suffragist movement, and worked together in a decades-long struggle for a federal amendment giving voting rights to women.

They were both abolitionists and worked for equal rights for African Americans and women. Stanton also supported a broad spectrum of women's rights, including employment rights, property rights, custody rights and birth control.

Anthony was a leader in the American Anti-Slavery Society and helped fugitives on the Underground Railroad. She called for unconditional emancipation and a complete end to racial discrimination.

Susan B. Anthony was arrested for trying to vote in the presidential election of 1872. After being tried and convicted for illegally voting, she refused to pay the fine saying, "I shall never pay a dollar of your unjust penalty."

In 1878, Anthony and Stanton succeeded in getting a bill giving women the right to vote introduced in Congress. The bill, known as the Anthony Amendment, became the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920, 42 years after the two women introduced it.

IDA B. WELLS

ANTI- LYNCHING JOURNALIST

Ida B. Wells was one of the most fearless advocacy journalists in the nation's history. As an investigative reporter and newspaper editor, she documented the horrific crime of lynching, and carried out a brave struggle against the widespread torture and murder of Black people.

Wells was a leader in the civil rights movement, as well as an activist for women's rights and the women's suffrage movement. Born in Mississippi in 1863, she later moved to Memphis, where she became a schoolteacher. In 1884, 71 years before Rosa Parks, Wells was dragged off a train when she refused to give up her seat in the first-class section. She successfully sued the railroad and won her case.

Wells began reporting on racial injustice for *Free Speech and Headlight*, a Memphis newspaper; she eventually became the paper's editor and co-owner.

In 1889, three of her closest friends were lynched by a white mob in Memphis, and Wells began doing investigative reporting to expose widespread lynchings in the South. She also began speaking out across the nation in a virtual one-woman anti-lynching campaign.

A mob destroyed the offices of her newspaper in retaliation for her stories about lynching, but Wells would not end her crusade. She published *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*, and reported that blacks were often lynched for minor offenses as a form of intimidation, repression and social control.

ALICE PAUL

HUNGER STRIKES IN PRISON

Alice Paul was a Quaker who initiated bold new strategies in the movement for women's voting rights, including militant acts of civil disobedience, picketing the White House with a group of suffragists called "Silent Sentinels," and carrying out hunger strikes in prison.

In the crucial decade from 1910 to 1920, Alice Paul became the main strategist of the women's suffrage movement, and the leader of the National Women's Party. She was instrumental in the successful battle to pass the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1920, giving women the right to vote.

She was opposed to war and when the U.S. entered World War I, she organized pickets at the White House, "protesting a battle for democracy abroad while there was so little democracy at home."

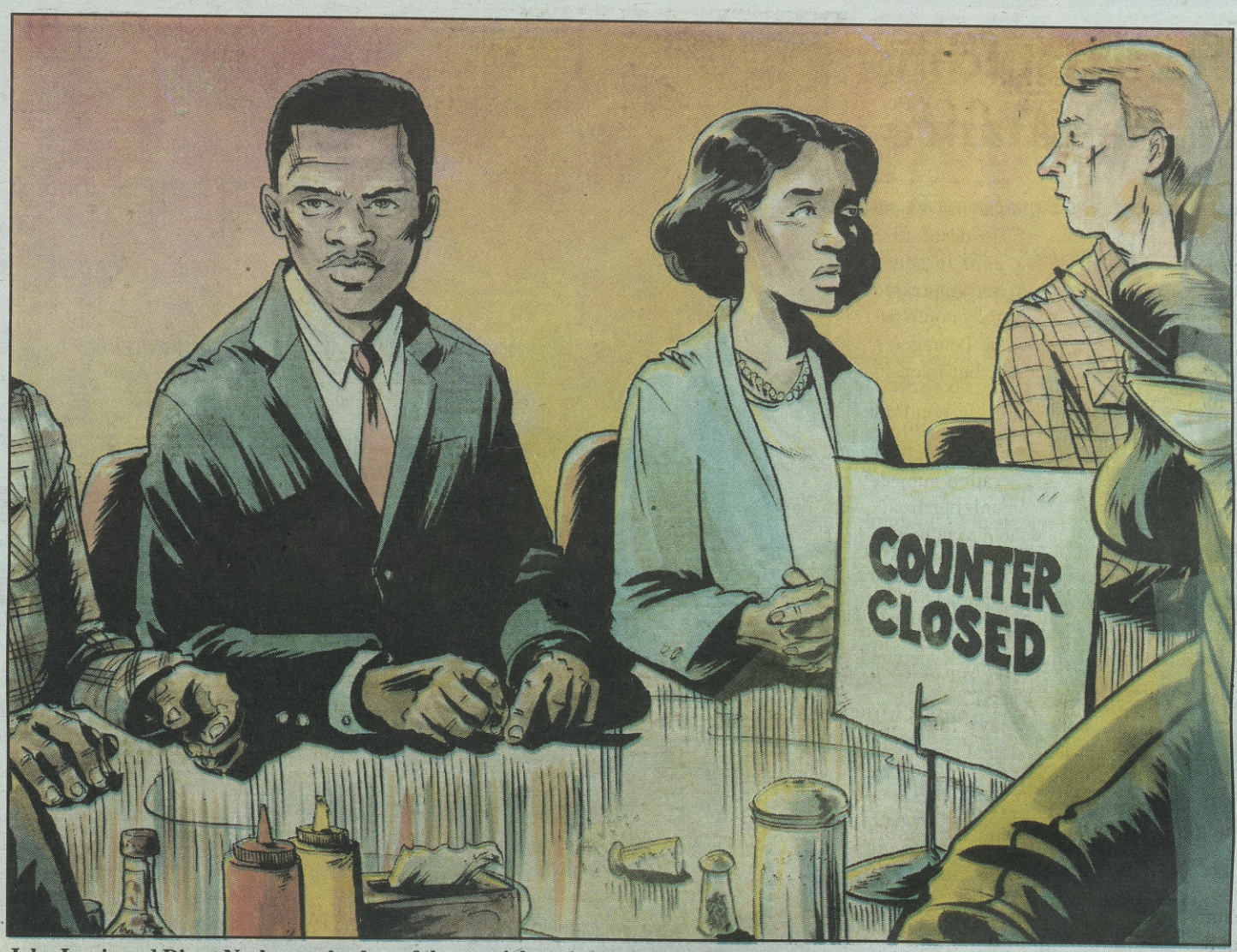
When Alice Paul and other suffragists were arrested and jailed in the notoriously brutal and squalid Occoquan Workhouse in Virginia, Paul demanded that the women be treated as political prisoners, and launched a prison hunger strike.

Jail authorities tried to break their spirits with brutal force-feedings, beatings, and horrible jail conditions. The shocking mistreatment of the imprisoned suffragists generated public outrage and media attention and women flocked to Washington, D.C. Alice Paul's acts of civil disobedience were crucial in winning public support for the Nineteenth Amendment.

After voting rights for women were won, she began concentrating on passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. She was able to get the Equal Rights Amendment introduced into Congress in 1923, a visionary bill that was far ahead of its time.

Alice Paul also played a major role in adding protection for the rights of women to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

See **Feminist Icons of Resistance** *page 8*



John Lewis and Diane Nash were leaders of the nonviolent sit-ins carried out by the Nashville Student Movement that succeeded in desegregating lunch counters in Nashville, Tennessee.

Art by Nate Powell from **March: Book One** by John Lewis & Andrew Aydin

When buses were burned and Freedom Riders were brutally attacked in Alabama, CORE decided to cancel the action due to violence. Diane Nash bravely stepped forward at a crucial turning point in history and refused to let the Freedom Rides die.

Feminist Icons of Resistance

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MOTHER JONES

"THE MOST DANGEROUS WOMAN IN AMERICA"

Mary Harris "Mother" Jones was a firebrand labor organizer who tirelessly fought against unfair working conditions and the inhumanity of childhood labor. She was a cofounder of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

In 1903, Jones organized a Children's Crusade on behalf of young textile workers exploited in mines and factories. She and the children marched from Philadelphia all the way to Oyster Bay, New York, to confront President Teddy Roosevelt, demanding reforms in the child labor laws.

She worked with the United Mine Workers and became an effective champion of justice and better pay for workers, and also organized the wives and children of striking workers to protest on their behalf.

Mother Jones was so successful at organizing strikes and picket lines that when the authorities arrested her and put her on trial during a coal strike in West Virginia in 1902, the district attorney called her "the most dangerous woman in America."

During a strike by the United Mine Workers in West Virginia in 1912, she was arrested under martial law and tried before a military court. She was sentenced to 20 years in prison by the military court but was freed when Sen. John Kern launched a Senate investigation into conditions in the coal mines.

Her famous declaration was: "Pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living."

FANNIE LOU HAMER

THE VOICE OF A MOVEMENT

When Fannie Lou Hamer tried to register to vote at the Sunflower County Courthouse in Indianola, Mississippi, on August 31, 1962, she was immediately fired from the Mississippi plantation where she had worked for 18 years as a timekeeper and sharecropper.

When the plantation owner told her to either withdraw from voter registration or face eviction, she refused to back down from her principles. She lost her job and her home simply for attempting to vote.

After trying to register, Hamer and her family were constantly stalked by men with rifles who cursed at her and threatened to shoot her.

It only strengthened her convictions.

Soon, Hamer became a field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), one of the most dangerous job descriptions in Mississippi.

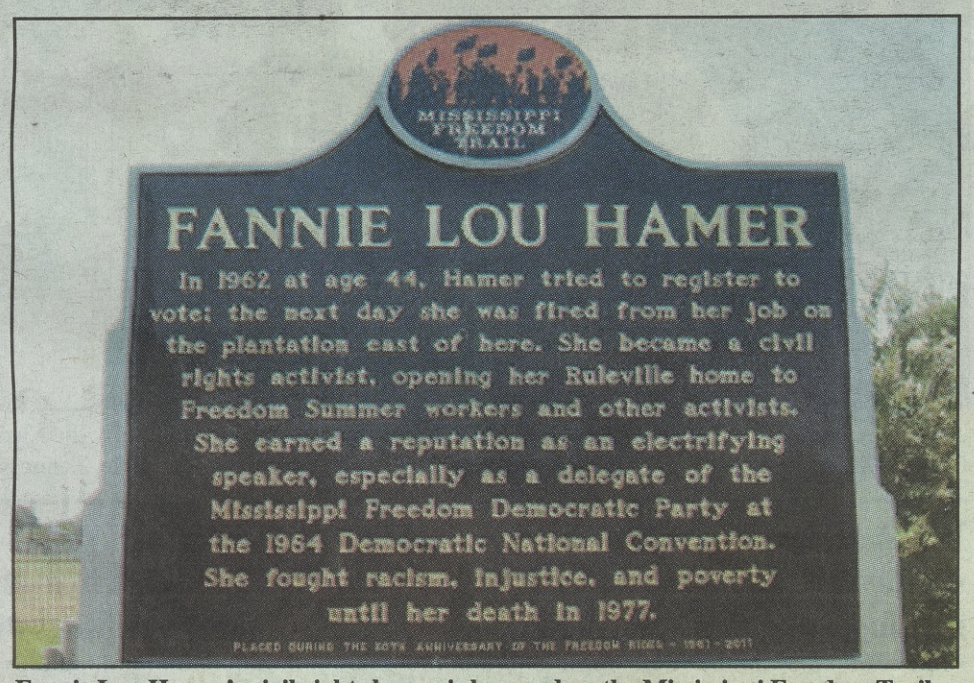
She played a vital role in organizing the Mississippi Freedom Summer which brought young black and white activists to the state from all over the country to overcome the racist barriers to voting. She also sought food, clothing and support for needy families at a time of great hunger and poverty in Mississippi.

In June of 1963, Hamer traveled with other activists to an educational workshop in South Carolina, but when the bus returned, Mississippi police arrested and jailed them, and they were severely beaten in their jail cells in Winona.

Fannie Lou Hamer was beaten almost to death in her cell by two men with blackjacks. She suffered permanent kidney damage from the beating. Even though she suffered for the rest of her life from injuries caused by the brutal beating, she would not stop fighting for justice.

One year later, in the summer of 1964, Hamer was elected Vice-Chair of the Mississippi Freedom Democrats who had organized to challenge the state's segregated delegation to the Democratic National Convention.

Civil rights leader Fannie Lou Hamer organized the Mississippi Freedom Democrats.



Fannie Lou Hamer's civil rights legacy is honored on the Mississippi Freedom Trail.

President Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey refused to support the Mississippi Freedom Democrats in 1964, but Hamer's eloquent challenge to Johnson and Humphrey showed that her voice could shake up the White House.

The Mississippi Freedom Democrats were finally seated at the Democratic National Convention in 1968. That same year, Hamer worked in support of Martin Luther King's Poor People's Campaign.

Hamer was the courage and conscience of the civil rights struggle, and she was also its voice. She lifted people's spirits by singing stirring renditions of "Go Tell It on the Mountain," "Wade in the Water," and "Walk with Me Lord."

Due to her great dedication to the Freedom Movement, Hamer was threatened, arrested, beaten, and shot at.

She said, "Sometimes it seems like to tell the truth today is to run the risk of being killed. But if I fall, I'll fall five feet four inches forward in the fight for freedom. I'm not backing off."

DIANE NASH

THE COURAGE OF A FREEDOM RIDER

Diane Nash provided brave leadership in many crucial moments of the Freedom Movement, including the Nashville student sit-ins, the Freedom Rides and the Selma Voting Rights Movement. Nash was a cofounder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

When Nash was a 22-year-old student at Fisk University, she became a leader in the Nashville Student Movement's ultimately successful campaign to desegregate the city's lunch counters in 1960.

Nash and other students were trained in Gandhian nonviolence by Rev. James Lawson, and began a series of sit-ins at lunch counters. Nash advocated a "jail, no bail" policy by refusing to bail out of jail to maximize pressure on the city. After a few months of protests, all of Nashville's lunch counters were desegregated.

During the sit-ins, Nash publicly asked Nashville Mayor Ben West, "Do you feel it is wrong to discriminate against a person solely on the basis of their race or color?" Mayor West admitted he felt it was wrong, and Nashville's lunch counters were desegregated soon afterwards.

In 1961, when buses were burned and Freedom Riders were brutally attacked in Anniston and Birmingham, Alabama, CORE decided to cancel the Freedom Rides due to the violence. Diane Nash stepped forward at a turning point in history and refused to let the Freedom Rides die.

Despite warnings that they could be attacked and killed, Freedom Riders boarded the bus and traveled from Birmingham to Jackson, Mississippi. Before getting on the bus, Nash signed her last will and testament, showing the courage of her convictions in the face of death.

Diane Nash played a key role in calling for a voting rights project in Alabama, which resulted in the Selma to Montgomery marches and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference awarded its highest honor, the Rosa Parks Award, to Diane Nash and James Bevel for sparking the Selma Voting Rights Movement.

DOROTHY DAY

THE WORKS OF MERCY

Countless people have been inspired to dedicate their lives to peace and social justice by the example of Dorothy Day. Day co-founded the Catholic Worker movement with Peter Maurin and dedicated her life to providing food and hospitality to poor, hungry and homeless persons.

In Dorothy Day's vision, the works of mercy not only meant providing food and shelter to poor people in the inner city, but also seeking economic justice for workers, protesting war and nuclear weapons, and resisting a capitalist system that exploited and oppressed people.

Day was an advocacy journalist and editor of the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, reporting on labor strikes, supporting the rights of workers, speaking against war and militarism, and giving a voice to the poorest members of society.

"Sometimes it seems like to tell the truth today is to run the risk of being killed. But if I fall, I'll fall five feet four inches forward in the fight for freedom. I'm not backing off." — Fannie Lou Hamer

Before converting to Catholicism, Day had worked for women's suffrage, opposed warfare, written for socialist newspapers, and supported the IWW, one of the most radical labor unions.

Day deepened in her spiritual life, yet remained just as radically committed to peace and justice. She was jailed for refusing to take part in civil defense drills, and arrested for supporting the farmworkers. Her faith led to lifelong acts of solidarity with poor and homeless people.

Dorothy Day drew a contrast between the works of mercy and the Vietnam War. "The works of mercy are the opposite of the works of war — feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, nursing the sick, visiting the prisoner. But we are destroying crops, setting fire to entire villages and to the people in them. We are not performing the works of mercy but the works of war."

PLANTED BY THE WATER

In her recent article, "Finding Hope: Reweaving Then and Now" in *On the Issues Magazine*, Pam McAllister reflects on the many heroic women who are leading social change movements today and reweaving the web of life. She writes that groups of women such as Code Pink and Women In Black have "come together to do our work of reweaving."

In a remarkable poetic metaphor, McAllister says that the names of these women are "like prayer beads, markers on a long strand, each one a reminder that women everywhere continue doing the work of reweaving the web of life."

It is illuminating to learn of the women that McAllister now names as the "prayer beads" who help protect life in the face of a culture of death and injustice.

Some of her recent heroines are Asmaa Mahfouz, a young Egyptian activist who helped to spark a largely nonviolent mass uprising when she used social media to challenge Egyptian people to meet her in Cairo's Tahrir Square, and another young woman, Rachel Corrie, "who became a martyr in 2003 when she attempted to act as a human shield against the bulldozing of a Palestinian home."

McAllister expresses great admiration for Aung San Suu Kyi who was placed under house arrest in Burma, but "has never wavered from advocating nonviolence as both a tactic and a way of life."

She heralds the crucial work of women peacemakers in far-flung areas of the globe, including Leymah Gbowee who organized thousands of Muslim and Christian women to conduct sit-ins that were instrumental in bringing an end to a violent civil war in Liberia; and Cindy Sheehan, who stirred a nation by challenging President Bush's war in Iraq after losing her son there.

Reminding us that our care must be extended to the natural world, McAllister praises Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmental activist who fought against deforestation in Kenya by founding the Green Belt Movement "and organizing women to plant trees all over the nation."

Her dedication to ecological preservation is emblematic of the spirit of one of the most long-lived movement anthems: *"Just like a tree that's planted by the water, we shall not be moved."*

Interweaving a Vision of Peace and Women's Rights

The *Street Spirit* Interview with Shelley Douglass, Part 2

The feminism that I believe in is a defense of all life. Not only women, not only the earth, but all together. It's all a web—reweaving the web.

Jim and Shelley Douglass demonstrate against the Iraq War at their weekly peace vigil in Birmingham, Alabama.

Interview by Terry Messman

Street Spirit: *Concern for the rights of women, both in society and in the peace movement, was always a part of Ground Zero's message to the larger movement. Can you describe how feminism and women's issues became interwoven with Ground Zero's peace work?*

Shelley Douglass: Sure. Well, you have to remember that Ground Zero and Pacific Life Community, which preceded it, were founded on the idea that nonviolence was a way of life. So it wasn't just a political type of resistance campaign against Trident. It was an attempt, and is an attempt, to learn a new way of living where things like Trident are not necessary anymore. In order to do that, you have to have justice, because the point of the weaponry is to defend things that are unjust or structures that are unjust. So equal rights for women was part of the basis of what we were doing.

Spirit: *You once wrote that Ground Zero found that challenging militarism also meant confronting the issues of sexism, racism and economic injustice.*

Douglass: Exactly. It's all part of one system that oppresses all kinds of people. And personally, speaking for those of us who founded Pacific Life Community and then Ground Zero, we were coming out of a number of years of intense resistance to the Vietnam War where basically everything else got shunted aside.

Spirit: *What exactly was shunted aside? All the personal issues that led some to say that the personal is political?*

Douglass: Yeah, *all* the other issues. Yeah, it was (supposedly) selfish to think about your own problems or your own oppression when the Vietnam War was going on and people were being napalmed all the time. It was that sort of intensity: "We have to stop the war and that's the most important thing."

The result of that, of course, was very difficult for our friendships, our marriages and our families. Marriages broke up and people went to jail for long terms that they weren't able to cope with. Kids were neglected, not across the board, and I'm not saying we were all horrible people, but we did things in a way that didn't give any honor to the way we were living. I guess you could say that, even as we resisted it, the war was kind of in our lives in the way that we treated each other.

Spirit: *So people's lives began falling apart because the urgent demands of anti-war organizing took such a heavy toll?*

Douglass: It did. Exactly. And when we began the Trident campaign, we were just coming out of that kind of experience and most of us had no desire at all to do any kind of resistance or political action any more. That was it, you know. We didn't want any more of that. [laughs]

Spirit: *But then good old Bob Aldridge comes along talking about the Trident.*

Douglass: Good old Bob Aldridge, right. When he gave us that look and said, "Do you know where the Trident is stationed?" We're like, "Oh no!" [laughs]

But we couldn't *not* respond. So when we had our initial retreat, the whole point of that retreat was to figure out how we could resist Trident, but do so in a way that would allow us to remain human and to even grow and nurture each other.

I'm a little dismayed at some of the popular feminism now: "Oh, we're so thrilled that we have a woman general or that women can be in combat." That wasn't our idea, at least the part of the feminist movement that I belong to. Our idea was not to get a piece of the pie and lord it over everybody else. It was to have a different pie altogether.

That was where nonviolence came in as a way of life — and especially for the women. This was in the mid-'70s and we women were all very aware of the kind of obvious sexism in the peace movement. You know, who did what chores and who got quoted and who was a public speaker and who wasn't — all of that stuff.

Spirit: *Instead of leaving it in the abstract as "who did what," could you describe what the actual practices were in the movement at the time?*

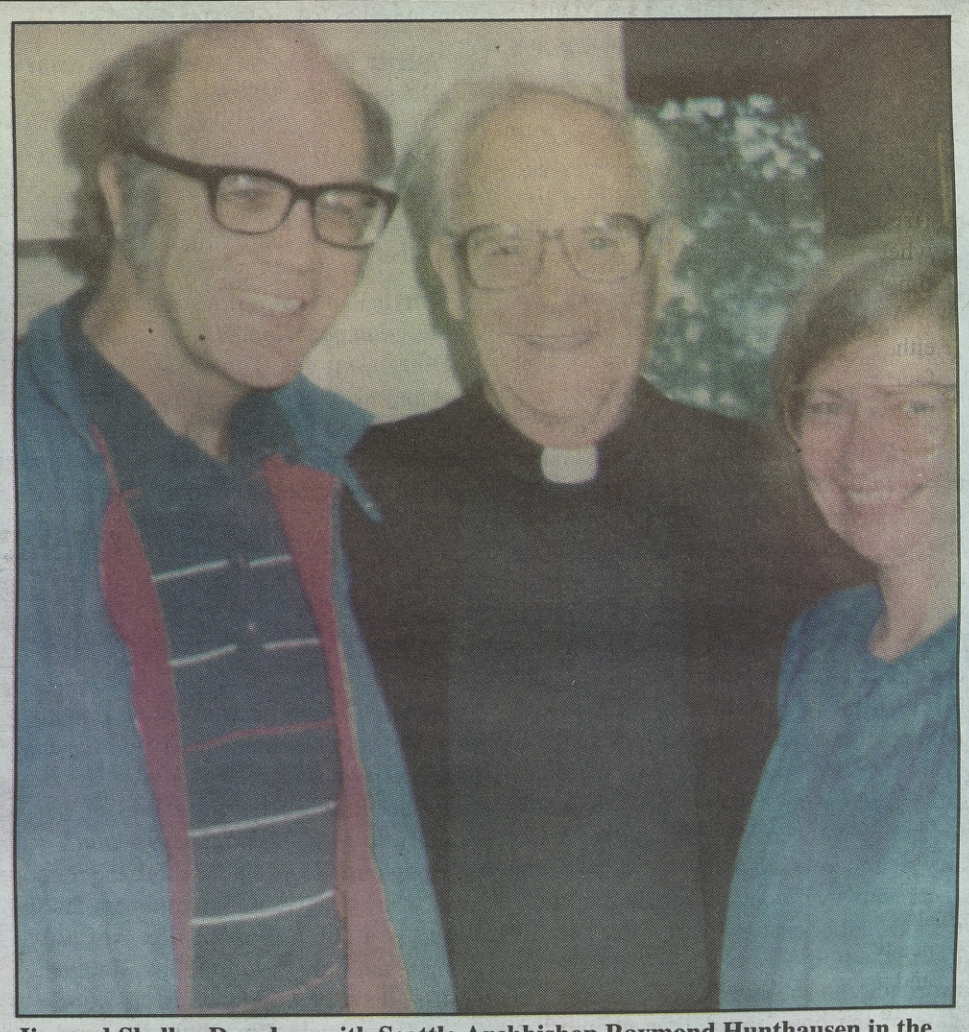
Douglass: Well, the men did most of the public speaking, and the men also spoke most in the meetings. I can remember a number of meetings where I would say something and a few minutes later some man would say "well, as Jim said" — and that gets kind of old. [laughs]

We did a lot of providing of refreshments, we women, and we made sure copies were prepared. All that kind of stuff tended to fall to the women while the men were out doing the sort of public and maybe dangerous kinds of things. And, of course, we didn't like that. So initially, on the personal level again, we began to do exercises in our meetings that would sort of even the balance.

Spirit: *What kinds of exercises?*

Douglass: Like when we had a Pacific Life Community meeting, we would give everybody matchsticks at the beginning of the meeting. Each time you talked, you surrendered a matchstick and, initially, the men after half an hour had no more matchsticks and so the women did all the talking after that. [laughs]

That was very interesting because it showed both that the men were dominating, but it also meant that the women had to take some responsibility for making decisions. So we realized in a way it was more comfortable to sit back and let them dominate and then we could critique what they had done, because we weren't the ones making those choices.



Jim and Shelley Douglass with Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen in the 1980s when Hunthausen joined the protests against nuclear arms at the Trident base.

Spirit: *So your matchstick experiment confirmed your sense of male domination in the peace groups.*

Douglass: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, well I would not ever question that. There certainly was. So we did things like that. We used consensus decision-making, which is very long and time-consuming, but it does honor everybody and that's what we wanted to do.

Spirit: *Did you find that the consensus process gave more people a voice and honored their ideas?*

Douglass: Yes, we chose it to honor everyone's input and perspective. We were very committed to that. We didn't just go into this sight unseen. We did trainings in how to do consensus. We

See **Shelley Douglass Interview** *page 10*

Interview with Shelley Douglass

from page 9

learned a lot from the Quakers, and from the Movement for a New Society, also.

So we were trying to experiment with ways of honoring everybody's voice, although not everybody got their way each time, of course. That was not possible. But the whole idea of the Trident campaign was that we're all part of this system that oppresses and we can all change. So we have to learn to change just as much as somebody working on the Bangor base has to learn to change. We were trying to invent ways so that could happen.

Spirit: *In anti-nuclear groups in the Bay Area, consensus was very effective, even in really large meetings. We found it resulted in greater unity and better decisions, and it was way more democratic. Did you find that to be the case?*

Douglass: We did find that to be the case. It created greater unity because everybody had been heard, and when we came up with a decision, everybody could live with it. Not everybody thought it was wonderful, but there was nobody there who absolutely could not deal with that decision. So together we could support whatever it was we had decided to do.

Spirit: *Consensus often was taught to anti-nuclear groups by women from feminist organizations. What else did feminist principles bring to Ground Zero's work?*

Douglass: As a part of that same discipline, we tried to work on our child-rearing practices. We were all fairly young at that point in the '80s and we had lots of little kids around, ranging from almost newborns up to early teens. So we tried to give them a sense of taking part. They had their own meetings while we met and we tried to give them a sense that their voices were heard.

They did all kinds of things. They did fun things, and arts and crafts things, and they also talked about the arms race and oppression. It would be interesting if you could find one of those kids to see what they think now. [laughs] Ours were so little, I'm not sure they would remember much.

But we had one experience where we were at a Fellowship of Reconciliation gathering, planning for a civil disobedience action. The kids had their own program and sent a delegation to the grownups saying that they didn't think it was right that we should always be the ones who got to get arrested, because we were always saying that we were doing it for them. So they wanted to get arrested too.

We took that very seriously and we arranged an action where the kids would go with us to the action. I think the youngest that went with us was our son Tom, who was probably about five, and the oldest was an early teen. We had told the police we were coming and we made sure that there were people who had legal documents that would allow them to take the kids out of custody after arrest. We all did the action together and we were all arrested, and the kids were taken to the gate of the base and delivered into the hands of their responsible parties.

Spirit: *What kind of action did the adults and children do together?*

Douglass: Most of our actions at that point were going over the fence and going into the Trident base. I think that one was going in for an "Interdependence Day" picnic on July Fourth so it was a family kind of thing. You know, you go for a picnic as a family and —

Spirit: *And then you get arrested as a family. Were the kids arrested inside the Trident base?*

The Japanese Buddhist monks of the Nipponzan Myohoji order have marched across the country seeking and praying for peace.

Douglass: Yeah, yeah. They were all trespass actions. I would guess there were around a dozen kids and they were given to their responsible parties and then we were taken off to jail. I think we spent a night or two in jail waiting for arraignment and then of course we went back for trial. But they were very high on doing it.

Spirit: *Once you accept that kids are actually human beings, I guess you've got to accept them as part of the movement?*

Douglass: [Laughs] Yeah right. They're human beings too, so they're part of it.

Spirit: *We had the same thing in the Livermore Action Group. There was a whole children's collective that planned their own action. About 60 got arrested and they were terrific and dedicated.*

Douglass: That's great. I didn't know about that.

Spirit: *Was it a positive experience for the kids that participated?*

Douglass: Yes, I think so. They did what they said they were going to do. They felt very good about doing that and they kept being involved. As the kids grew up, some of them joined in other actions.

Spirit: *In Birmingham, hundreds of children and youth marched for freedom from the 16th Street Baptist Church.*

Douglass: Sure, the kids saved that one.

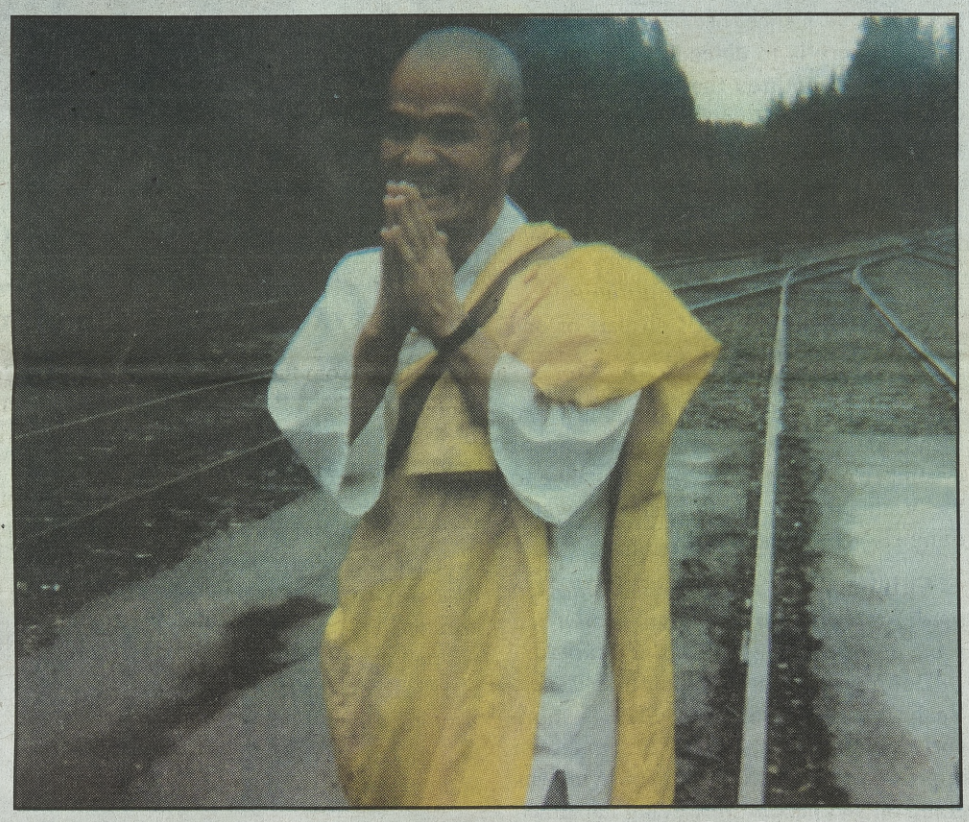
Spirit: *They turned the nation around. Now, do you think the women's movement broadened our vision of nonviolence? Do you think it connected the issues of war, sexism and environmental destruction?*

Douglass: Yeah, I do. I think the feminism that I believe in, the feminism that I know, is a defense of all life. Not only women, not only the earth, but all together. It's all a web — reweaving the web.

And, you know, I'm a little dismayed at some of what I guess you'd call the popular feminism that you hear about now: "Oh, we're so thrilled that we have a woman general or that women can be in combat." Or, "Women have to break the glass ceiling and take over the corporations that are exploiting everyone." [laughs]

I mean, that wasn't our idea, at least the part of the feminist movement that I belong to. Our idea was not to get a piece of the pie and lord it over everybody else. It was to have a different pie altogether.

Spirit: *What do you mean by a different pie? A different model of the economy and society?*



A Buddhist monk, Utsumi Shonin, prays for peace on the railroad tracks that transport Trident nuclear missiles into the Bangor Naval Base.

Douglass: Instead of a corporate, capitalist, militarist pie where your eye is on making a profit and dominating and controlling, we wanted a pie that was more circular, with cooperation, with equal justice for all, with an egalitarian kind of economics, with some kind of economic parity, and with nonviolence rather than violence.

What we were trying to do in the Pacific Life Community was find a whole new way of life, where we wouldn't depend on dominating people — any people.

Spirit: *Do you think that's a major part of the original vision that has been lost?*

Douglass: Well, just like everything else, the women's movement is multifaceted and parts of it have been co-opted, I think. Parts of it maybe never agreed with what I wanted in the first place. [laughs]

Spirit: *No, I think it did agree. I think there was a widely shared vision across the board, and that vision of equality and justice has been co-opted. How do you think it ended up being co-opted?*

Douglass: It goes back again to this idea that if you're the woman, you can be the token CEO of Exxon or something where you're exploiting both the earth and other people, and you're making a whole bundle of money. So basically, what you're doing is, you're fitting the classic male model and you have to become that kind of a person.

We used to talk about the so-called female qualities and male qualities, and about how women are supposed to be soft and caring and sensitive, and men are dominating and aggressive and strong. And if we shared power, women would bring all these good qualities to the mix. Our belief was always that we're all supposed to be all of those things and it's not divided separately between women and men.

But what seems to me to have happened is that everybody has decided that the so-called masculine characteristics of dominance and aggression are the ones that we need to get ahead. So we join the system and I think women can become that kind of masculine just as well as anybody else. Look at Margaret Thatcher, or Madeleine Albright for that matter.

Spirit: *So society has redefined its picture of strong or liberated women in the image of the patriarchy?*

Douglass: Exactly. Exactly. The domination system wins again.

Spirit: *Also, when looking at women's*

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rights, the hardships faced by women in poverty are almost never mentioned. But that has a lot to do with women's rights.

Douglass: Well, at Mary's House, people here don't have very much money. They're usually glad when they're pregnant, but they don't always feel that they have the support they need to carry pregnancy through. So the choice is not really a choice, because there are all kinds of factors that control the choice they feel they have to make.

Spirit: *Factors like poverty and economic hardships?*

Douglass: Oh yeah, economic injustice, racism, all of those things are involved in it. And nonsupportive spouses, or no spouses. The men just disappear at that point. I'm not going to say anybody is wrong for whatever they do. I don't think legislation is a good solution to it, but I think we get so busy defending the right to abortion that we forget to ask the question of whether it is the right thing to do for me or for any individual woman.

It's just a question I have because obviously there are some situations where it gets used in ways that I think kind of play into the hands of the domination system. When a woman turns up pregnant and the man says, "here go take care of it," and gives her some money and that's supposed to deal with the problem. To me, that's a very patriarchal way of dealing with it.

FOR DELEGATION TO IRAQ

Spirit: *You went on a Fellowship of Reconciliation delegation to Iraq that delivered medicine to children in 1990 when U.S. sanctions had caused deprivation. Why did you decide to go to Iraq?*

Douglass: It was before the U.S. had actually attacked and Saddam Hussein's government was holding hostages to protect itself against possible attack.

Spirit: *American and other international hostages?*

Douglass: Right, America being the ringleader, of course. We had imposed sanctions on Iraq and Iraq produces oil and not much else, so they were basically not allowed to trade at all with the outside world. This meant that after a fairly short time, they ran out of medicine, they ran out of toilet paper, they ran out of anything they had to import.

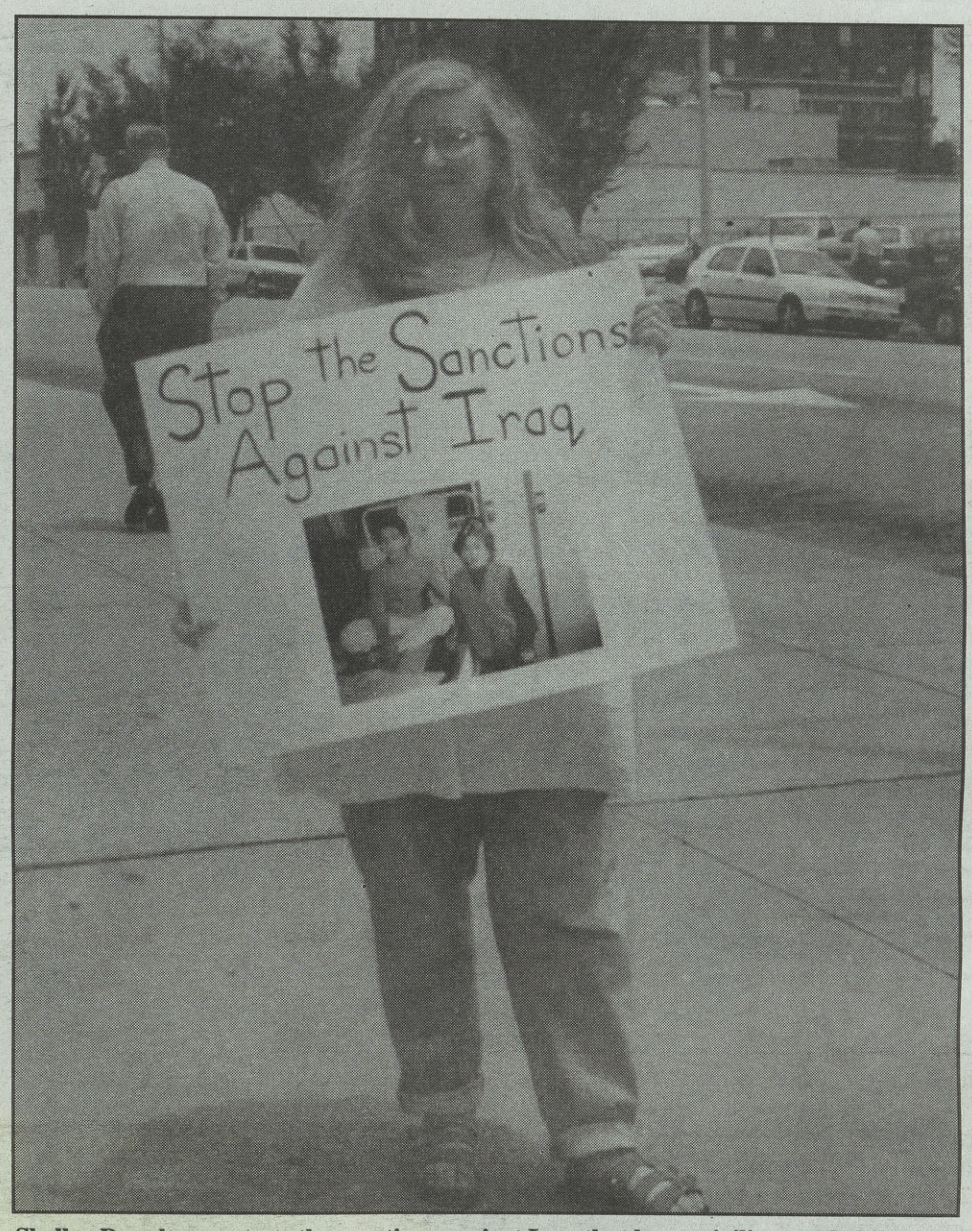
They were suffering under the sanctions, and there was a citizen movement led partly by the FOR to go to Iraq and see the situation and bring back a report to share with people because the government wasn't giving good information. I was the former national chair of the FOR council, so I was asked to go and be one of the co-leaders on this visit.

There had been a previous trip that Tom Gumbleton, the bishop from Michigan, had led and he had been able to bring back a hundred of the hostages. They had been released to him and there were only about that many hostages still remaining.

The hope was that we could at least visit them and make sure they were OK and perhaps even bring some more of them out. So we went. It was civil disobedience because we were taking baby formula and medicines into a country that was under sanctions. That broke the U.S. sanctions. It wasn't a criminal offense, but it was a civil offense that the Treasury Department could have charged us for.

Spirit: *Were you ever charged? And did you have any problem getting the medicines on the plane?*

Douglass: No. Other people later were charged, but we were not charged. We were flying from New York to Amman, Jordan. You couldn't fly into Iraq because of the sanctions, but it's legal to take whatever you want to Amman. We could get the medicines through because their destination was Amman. Then we took another flight from there to Baghdad.



Shelley Douglass protests the sanctions against Iraq that harm civilians and children.

Spirit: *What was your delegation able to accomplish?*

Douglass: When we got to Iraq, our purposes were to try and meet with the hostages, to meet with Iraqi people, to meet with any officials we could meet with, and talk about the need for peace, and to bring back as much information as we could. And we did all those things.

There were 13 of us on the delegation, and we had a minder who was a government person who was meant to keep us out of trouble. But luckily, since there were 13 of us, he couldn't keep track of us all. [laughs] We went to universities, we went to farms, we went to women's groups, all kinds of places. But the interesting thing at that time — now this was before the first bombing — is that Iraq was a socialist country and we saw very little, if any, Third World kind of poverty.

Spirit: *Really? That contradicts the picture of Iraq that most Americans had.*

Douglass: Yeah. The Christians were supportive of Saddam Hussein because Hussein gave them the same breaks as the Muslims got in terms of taxes and legal protections and stuff. The Christians were not, at that point, being harassed in any way. They had their churches.

And we visited the hostages. Many of them were holed up in the U.S. Embassy and we went with the idea that they were in dire straits, and I took communion all the way from our Catholic Church in Alabama in a little container so that I could give them communion.

We went in a cab to the U.S. Embassy one morning. We were coming to visit these poor oppressed people and they were hostages, so it was scary. But they had a Vietnamese Embassy staff that was feeding them and taking care of them. They had all kinds of electronic devices, like TVs, radios and all that kind of stuff, and they roamed fairly freely, as far as I could tell, around Baghdad.

When I went to take communion to the Catholics, they said, "Well, why don't you meet us at Mass tomorrow?" [laughs] So we did. It was Advent and we went to Mass at the little Catholic Church not too far from the embassy with all the Iraqi Catholics and with these guys from the embassy. A couple of them actually got in touch with us after they were released to say that they were home safely. I think our visit did help get them released, but they weren't released to us, they were released to John Connally.

Spirit: *So you were able to meet with Iraqi government officials and ask them to release the hostages?*

Douglass: We did. We had a meeting with the Speaker of the Parliament. You know, these are all very cut-and-dry kind of things. It's not like we were having any intense diplomatic talks. We were just there to say this isn't a good idea because it's going to lead to an attack and it would be a good idea to let them go. As it turned out, unbeknownst to us, one of our delegates was an oil company employee and he was kind of working behind the scenes and actually disappeared from our delegation toward the end and turned up again with John Connally from Texas.

Spirit: *You mean he turned up with John Connally in public or something?*

Douglass: Right, with John Connally.

Spirit: *Connally used to be the governor of Texas and then Secretary of the Treasury. What was he at this time?*

Douglass: I think he was just an oil company executive at the time. So it's not as simple as it seems, and even in peace delegations you find people who are actually working for what I would consider the other side.

Spirit: *So this guy who was connected to Connally somehow got on an FOR delegation?*

Douglass: He was on an FOR delegation, yeah. He was a corporate plant and he was not on the trip roster because he joined at the very last minute at the airport. It was not a good thing, that's for sure.

Spirit: *Was Connally in Iraq trying to expedite the release of the hostages?*

Douglass: Yes, he brought a plane, as I remember, and put them all on the plane and took them home.

Spirit: *Were the hostages released at about the time you guys were returning?*

Douglass: Yes, they were released and some of them called us once they got back to the states to say thank you for coming and for caring and all that. That was very moving. But in a way, that's a sidelight to the whole point of my two trips to Iraq.

Spirit: *What did you experience in visiting the hospital and seeing at first hand some of the effects of U.S. sanctions?*

Douglass: At that time, before any of the wars, Iraq was basically a developed country. They had very good medical care and it was socialized medicine so everybody got it. They had free college, so if you kept your grades up, you could go all the way through a B.A. degree and not pay anything — women too. It was a secular Muslim country, so women didn't have to wear the burqa; they wore whatever they wanted.

We met with all kinds of people who were just saying they don't like Saddam, but what the United States is doing is just making us support him all the more because he may be a bastard, but he's our bastard — that kind of thing. Of course, they were very careful about talking about him.

At that point, the hospitals were among the most heavily affected by the sanctions because they had to import everything from light bulbs for the incubators to tubing to aspirin. It all had to come from outside the country. Their supplies had run out.

So we would go to the hospitals and the doctors would give us the tour. And it was so sad, especially in the children's hospitals because they had children there who were sick and who could have been cured if they just had the right medicine, but who were dying. They couldn't give them fluids, they didn't have IVs, they didn't have saline, they didn't have aspirin. They didn't have anything.

We met with parents in the hospital whose kids would have survived had they been able to get decent medical care, but whose kids were dying. And we had little peace doves and things, toys to give them and balloons and bubbles to blow, but the medicine we brought was a drop in the bucket compared to the need, because it's a country with a lot of people and they needed medical supplies.

Spirit: *What did the parents of children who were sick or dying for lack of medical care say to you?*

Douglass: People in Iraq would say to us a lot, "What does Bush have against us? Why is America doing this to us?" They made a distinction between us and the American government. They were asking us, "Why are they doing this?"

Spirit: *Because the sanctions didn't just affect the Iraqi government, but primarily hurt the Iraqi people.*

Douglass: Right, right. It probably didn't affect Saddam very much at all, but it certainly affected all kinds of people. So we were kind of speechless with the parents in the hospitals because most of us were parents and we could imagine what it felt like to be there kind of helplessly with your child. That was very intense.

Spirit: *Several years later, you went to Iraq again. What was the purpose of this second delegation?*

Douglass: We were going mainly as a citizen peace venture trying to, again, understand the situation of the people in Iraq and see if there was anything we could do as citizens to lessen the hostility in this country. We were going there to try and come back and share with people here what was actually happening in Iraq.

Spirit: *How had things changed in the*

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years since your first trip?

Douglass: Well, I made the trip in March 2000, 10 years later, and as I was saying, on our first trip, Baghdad was a major developed city. There were low-income places, but there weren't any Third World levels of poverty that we saw. There was free education, religion was protected, all that kind of stuff. Good water, good sewage, power, electrical power all the time — just the things you would expect in a big city.

Ten years later, after the bombings, I went back on another delegation with Voices for Creative Nonviolence and now it was a Third World country — and that was done consciously by our government as a policy. That was the lesson.

They had bombed all the power plants. They bombed the water-purification centers. They bombed the communication centers. They bombed all of the infrastructure, and they kept the sanctions on so that nothing could be repaired. So everything was in total shambles at that point.

We went to the Amiriyah shelter, which was an underground shelter in Baghdad where women and kids and elderly people had taken shelter during the bombing. A smart bomb had gone into one of the air ducts and people were literally baked inside when this bomb went off. This happened because the U.S. military thought that this was a command site for their military — you know, it was a "smart bomb." So it's like going to Hiroshima. Inside the Amiriyah shelter, there are shadows baked on the wall of people who were incinerated in the shelter *when the bomb hit.*

This stupa was built at Ground Zero after permission was denied to build the Peace Pagoda. The stupa is still there to this day! Photo by Tom Douglass

Spirit: *That's horrible. So you witnessed this slaughter of civilians in U.S. bombing raids, and you saw how 10 years of sanctions had caused great damage.*

Douglass: Right, and there was no reason for it. Saddam Hussein was a tyrant and he did horrible things and it was all politically oriented so you didn't open your mouth; but you could live safely, you could worship, you could go to university. Once the U.S. bombed during those two wars, nothing was secure anymore in Iraq.

You know, people were scrambling just to eat. It was incredible and, of course, we kept the sanctions on the whole time and we kept changing the reason for why we had sanctions.

Spirit: *So you saw at first hand that things had dramatically worsened for Iraqi civilians because of the war and sanctions?*

Douglass: Yes, because of the war and the sanctions. Yeah, it went from being a repressive, but otherwise good life, to being almost impossible. And, it's gotten worse since then, which is the key to why there's so much hostility to the U.S.

Spirit: *So the U.S. government made the people of Iraq hate and fear us and called that "mission accomplished."*

Douglass: Right, exactly. And that's an obvious example that is just very stark, but we do that all the time in the world.

Spirit: *What was the reaction of others on your delegation, especially those who hadn't been there before? How did they react to seeing these conditions?*

Douglass: We were all horrified. Well, Kathy Kelley, of course, had been there many times, but I don't think anybody else had been there before. But you didn't have to have seen it before to be horrified at what was going on then.

We saw the conditions, and the way people were having to live. We already knew about U.S. policy, U.S. bombing runs. We knew what had been done, but now we were walking around in sewage in the middle of the streets because the sewers had been bombed. The city only had electricity for two hours a day because the power plants had been bombed. And the sanctions were still going on.

PERSECUTION OF AN ARCHBISHOP

Spirit: *I just read the new biography of Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen,* A Still and Quiet Conscience. *He is such an admirable man, but it was shocking to learn more about the horrible indignities he suffered for speaking out for peace.*

Could you describe your impressions of the archbishop when he came to peace demonstrations at Ground Zero?

Douglass: Sure. He's the kind of person you would never think was an archbishop, you know? You would never think of him as an archbishop or anybody with any power. I mean he's just this guy, not particularly well dressed. When we knew him, he just seemed like this old guy and he was bald and had kind of a kindly persona. He listened a lot, and didn't do a lot of talking.

I think that the first time I met him, I was in jail. We had gotten arrested (for committing civil disobedience) and Jim and one other person in our group were both doing a fast. I don't remember why the archbishop came to visit us in jail, but people were concerned about Jim's safety, basically. I don't know who got him to come, but he came, and even though he didn't look or act like an archbishop, because he was the archbishop, the jail gave him a special visit. And they put Jim in a wheelchair and wheeled him down, and there was the archbishop!

Spirit: *Why was Jim Douglass in a wheelchair when he was in jail?*

Douglass: Jim was fasting and noncooperating with the jail, and so he wouldn't walk. Eventually he was taken to the hospital, and through his fast, we were able to get better food for everyone in the King County Jail.

So Jim was doing this fast and they wheeled him in, and there was the archbishop who wanted to know if he was all right. Then, the archbishop did not have to do this, but he came to the women's jail to tell us that Jim and John were OK.

It was a very pastoral kind of thing to do and he did wield his power because, you know, just Joe Blow wasn't going to be able to come in and see us outside of visiting hours. But he was very low key about doing it, and it wasn't like any big deal. He was just telling us what we needed to know.

He was always like that. He's very thoughtful, very caring. And I don't think I ever heard him say a word against any of the people who were against him.

When he came out with these kinds of controversial statements about not paying his taxes in resistance to nuclear weapons and "Trident is the Auschwitz of Puget Sound," and when he came to our demonstrations, he always made a point of going both before and afterward to the parishes where people were most opposed to whatever it was he had done. And he would just let them talk to him and he would talk to them and listen. The people didn't change their minds and refuse to pay war taxes, but most of them wound up with a very soft spot for the archbishop, even though they didn't agree with him.

Spirit: *Why would those who disagreed with him have a soft spot for him?*

Douglass: *Well, they felt respected and they had affection for him even though they thought he was kind of crazy.*

Spirit: *You're describing the person that I met when he came to speak on nuclear weapons in Berkeley at Pacific School of Religion in 1982. I thought he was so modest and unassuming, but this kindly person somehow had this prophetic fire in him. Did it surprise you that this soft-spoken man who didn't seem to want to offend anyone, would speak out so powerfully about nuclear weapons?*

Douglass: Well, yes and no. He was someone who followed the gospel. I mean, that was basically why he visited us at Ground Zero, because he was the pastor and that was one of the things he was supposed to do. So it didn't surprise me when he started speaking out against war and for peace. He knew exactly what he thought he should do and he wasn't going to do any more to fulfill anybody's expectations or make a big public thing, but he wasn't going to do any less either. And that's what got him in trouble, because the Vatican wanted him to do much less and he wasn't willing to step back.

Spirit: *The new biography gave me such a different picture. This low-key, modest man was actually one of the best athletes in football, basketball and track. He rose to positions of leadership everywhere he worked, quickly becoming president of Carroll College, and was appointed bishop at a very young age. A talented whirlwind of a man was concealed under his kindly, soft-spoken exterior.*

Douglass: He is pretty amazing, but I think that's how he got there. He got put in those positions because he was a pastor and he cared about people.

Spirit: *He protested nuclear weapons, and also spoke out for the rights of women in the church, the rights of gay people, and for economic justice. Jim Douglass told me that you can just look at the Beatitudes and that's Raymond Hunthausen all the way down the line.*

Douglass: Yeah, that's true. Another thing that strikes me is that he's so low key he doesn't like to be called archbishop. He always wanted us to call him "Dutch" (his nickname). And we're not big on clerical privilege, so if somebody calls me by my first name, I call them by their first name. But I could not bring myself to call him Dutch because he was the archbishop. So we compromised by calling him The Arch. [laughs]

But there was just a sense that he was a holy person, and is a holy person. And it wasn't somehow fitting to start palling around and calling him by his first name, even though we had a good friendship and he came and had meals with us, and all that kind of stuff. So it wasn't like we were kowtowing, but there is just a certain sense that this is a really special kind of person.

Spirit: *Why did you feel he was special, other than being the archbishop of the Seattle diocese?*

Douglass: Well, not because he was an archbishop, but because he was holy. He really stood for what he believed and he took a lot of flak for it. I didn't know until I read the book how much flak he took. He was a person who had read the gospel and he tried to live it out, and succeeded. And he was in a position in the church where that meant a lot to a lot of people.

He stood for people who were disenfranchised, and he stood for people who were poor. He stood for an end to the arms race. He reached out to people. You know, he's right in tune with Pope Francis, and it's just sad that he's not the bishop now.

But the thing that surfaced in the whole Vatican mess in Seattle, the thing that made it public, was over gay rights. There was an ordinance, an anti-discrimination ordinance, that was being proposed in Seattle, and at a staff meeting one day the archbishop said, "We're going to support this ordinance for gay rights."

And the then-auxiliary bishop, Donald Wuerl, said, "No we're not."

Archbishop Hunthausen said, "Well,

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I'm the archbishop and this is my decision." And Wuerl said, "No, that's not right." And they actually took the dispute to the Vatican and that's where it became public, even to the archbishop, that there were certain places where he no longer had his authority.

And the thing that I respected him for about that was he didn't allow it to be swept under the rug. He's a very loyal person to the church and the Vatican, but he wasn't going to let this just happen, so he did make a lot of it public. But not nearly as much of the very personal, painful stuff that we know now from the book.

Spirit: *It is so sad to read how the Vatican mistreated him for speaking his conscience about nuclear weapons and gay rights. It was terribly cruel to him and he had to live with that for the rest of his life.*

Douglass: I thought it was *horrible*. It's definitely one of the absolute low points in the history of the church in the Northwest. And it's an illustration of the way the Vatican had been handling its power by just crushing people, which is what they tried to do to him.

Spirit: *Yes, they deliberately tried to crush his spirit and silence him.*

Douglass: Yeah. I don't think he ever totally recovered from that, no matter how much people loved him. It was just — it still is very painful.

Spirit: *I don't think it's possible to fully recover from such a prolonged attack.*

Douglass: But he was fully supported by the people and the priests. He gets standing ovations. As soon as his name is said, everybody's on their feet, you know, because he was such a beloved figure.

Spirit: *It was such a gift to the church that they had this incredible prophetic leader who was loved by his people. But look how the Vatican treated that gift.*

Douglass: Yeah, look how they treated him. But what is really interesting to me is that (Donald) Wuerl was the guy initially sent to share power with Archbishop Hunthausen, and is the guy who we all couldn't stand. I've always been prejudiced against him since then and probably would still not agree with him. But he is now the archbishop of Washington, D.C., and just after this new encyclical came out, he was on the news defending this new encyclical that talks about social justice and how it comes from decades of Catholic teaching. [laughs]

Spirit: *He talks out of both sides of his mouth, and he's just a yes man to whoever the pope is. It was devastating for me to read in the book how much Hunthausen suffered because of the Vatican repression, and from people like Wuerl.*

Douglass: The church was very tense in those days in Seattle. It was a very tense kind of situation. We were not heavily involved in all that because we were out doing Trident stuff, but people knew that Archbishop Hunthausen supported us, so if we went somewhere to give a talk in a parish or a Catholic school, people would show up with tape recorders and record every word we said and basically use it to get him.

Spirit: *It's very sad that this man who was so compassionate and so dedicated to peace would have to suffer all that.*

Arson at the Peace Pagoda

Spirit: *It was also sad when Buddhist religious leaders were attacked when they worked for compassion and nonviolence at Ground Zero. Why did such a violent controversy erupt when they wanted to set up a peace pagoda at Ground Zero?*

Douglass: When Jim and I first moved down to Ground Zero, we had a visit from a Japanese guy who was dressed in orange robes and had a drum that he beat all the time. He said his name was Suzuki and he was a monk in a Japanese Buddhist order called Nipponzan Myohoji.

Suzuki-shonin told us about his order which was founded by a monk named Nichidatsu Fujii who had actually lived with Gandhi and had made a vow during World War II that he would not fight and he would work for peace out of his Buddhist teaching.

They're kind of Buddhist Franciscans in the sense that they own nothing and they walk all around the world, chanting this peace chant that's supposed to be the sound that would be made if the world were in perfect harmony. When they come to a site of intense violence, they stay and pray and eventually they build peace pagodas there, which are sites for prayer and for intensifying the power of peace and nonviolence.

So Suzuki came to see us and he was very taken with our idea of a nonviolent center by the Trident base. He would come and chant, and then, in 1980, he called us a few days before the election of Ronald Reagan happened and said, "Fujii Guruji is in New York and I want to bring him to Ground Zero and he has 30 monks and nuns. Please be ready." [laughs] [*Editor:* Nichidatsu Fujii, the founder of this Buddhist order, is also known as Guruji.]

So, you know, here's Jim and me and at that point there weren't a whole lot of people around, so we called a meeting and it just happened to be held on Election Day — that was a coincidence.

Spirit: *A meeting about peace and nuclear disarmament on the day Reagan was elected as president.*

Douglass: So Nichidatsu Fujii, who is sort of a Saint Francis, a modern saint, and these monks and nuns came to Ground Zero and there was a gathering of all kinds of people — Amish, Quaker, Catholic — just whoever we could pull together. We had a prayer meeting for peace and we told Guruji about Ground Zero and the struggles and the jail sentences people had been serving.

We showed him the land, and his response was that this should be the place where the first Peace Pagoda would be built in the United States because it was next to incomparable violence that hadn't yet been done and it was the place of resistance and suffering. We were a little bit taken aback, you know, because when these guys get going, they're kind of like a steamroller. They're very focused and very intense in their energy.

But we decided that this was a good thing. We have a long, continuing relationship with the monks that began back when first Suzuki and then Guruji came to Ground Zero. So some supporters of the monks drew up plans for a pagoda that might be at Ground Zero. Then the monks came to start work and somebody donated to us the geodesic dome that we put up.

Spirit: *How did the people who lived nearby respond to these plans?*

Douglass: The neighborhood was very suspicious of this. First of all, a lot of the people in the neighborhood at that time in the 1980s were people who had served in the Second World War or had living memories of relatives and parents who had served, and these were Japanese monks coming. So that was a huge obstacle. And people didn't really understand what the pagoda was. They formed an intense opposition against it.

One of their posters had school buses stacked up to the height they thought the pagoda would be, (and claimed) that we could spy into the base. That was the idea, that we could see over the trees from the top of the pagoda and watch what the base was doing. It was not very thoughtful, but very intense opposition.

We wound up having to apply for construction permits and had almost completed the process when it became a public issue. Then, after all the intense opposition, the county commissioners just denied the permits to build.

This was all happening at the same time as the first Trident was coming in, and I can't remember what year that was.

Spirit: *The USS Ohio came to the Bangor naval base in August 1982.*

Douglass: OK, well it was all happening in that same sort of time frame. A lot of this happened within that year of 1982. And the most intense thing was that when we were getting ready to blockade the Trident submarine, there was huge hostility, and people were very suspicious and the Navy spread misinformation about what we were planning to do, which didn't help. So people thought we were coming with weapons and that we were trying to blow it up and we were going to do all these very violent, scary things and the pagoda was seen as part of that.

Spirit: *They actually thought violent, scary things would happen when a nonviolent group was protesting the Trident and a peace pagoda was being planned by peaceful monks similar to St. Francis?*

Douglass: Yeah, we had some public meetings and we were accused of everything from getting ready to blow up the Trident to urinating on peoples' lawns. [laughs] You know, it's just like throw everything — throw the kitchen sink. But the hostility was so huge that you could almost feel it in the air.

It was a very, very hostile situation. It was kind of like the Civil Rights Movement in the South. You knew that people were really hostile, and during this time the monks and the Ground Zero people were using the geodesic dome for worship. We had a beautiful golden Buddha that had been shipped from India to go on the pagoda when it was completed, and that was in our dome. And then we had a kind of modernistic metal crucifix that somebody had made and given to us and so that was in the dome.

We used the dome for prayer and meditation and the monks often slept there when the weather was bad. So in the middle of the night in May of 1982, somebody went into the dome with an ax and smashed up the Buddha and smashed up the crucifix and then poured gasoline and lit the thing on fire.

Spirit: *Oh my God. They were basically burning down a church.*

Douglass: Yeah, and of course it was a total loss. The only thing left was the charred floor of the dome and some melted hunks of metal that were no longer recognizable, really. Luckily, nobody was sleeping in there so nobody was hurt, but of course the fire department came and the fire was put out.

We put out a statement "to those who burned our dome," which talked about nonviolence and forgiveness, and said that we hoped we could come together and make peace. We leafleted that statement on the base and gave it to the papers. Their response was that we probably set the dome on fire ourselves to get publicity.

Long after this all happened, we found out through the Freedom of Information Act that it was two brothers who were Marines on the base, twin brothers, who had snuck into the Ground Zero dome and trashed it and burned it. And the base *knew* that. All the time they were saying we probably did it ourselves, they *knew* it! They shipped the guys back out to California two days later.

Spirit: *Those two Marines were never even prosecuted for arson?*

Douglass: Oh no, and never even admitted they did it until we got the Freedom of Information Act. I mean, the base obviously knew because they had it in these papers, but nobody else knew.

Spirit: *That's just incredible. We supposedly have freedom of speech and religion, but the Navy covered up for the arsonists who burned down the dome.*

Douglass: Yeah, yeah. What happened, though, was I think that the action of theirs was kind of like lancing the boil. I think people began to realize what was the logical outcome of the way they were talking and acting, so it did kind of lessen the amount of violent rhetoric and hatred that was going around. And it may actually have been a help in the sense that the violence was kind of vented before the actual Trident demonstration happened.

Spirit: *So what did the Nipponzan Myohoji monks do at that point? Did they stay involved in the Trident campaign or give up on the Peace Pagoda?*

Douglass: There was a big group of them there because they were doing construction. The rebar for the pagoda was all in place and they were actually ready to pour the concrete, if I'm remembering correctly. So once the permits were denied, all that had to stop and we decided that there wasn't really any appeal at that point. We decided we would lay it to rest for the time being and just leave things where they were.

So we cleared off all the construction stuff, other than the form itself, and we took the remains of the Buddha and the crucifix and they were put into a rock base which is about 10 feet high, and on top of it, there is a stele (an upright slab used as a memorial) that has the words, "Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo," put on it. It's a site of prayer the way a pagoda would be, but it's much smaller and didn't need any construction permits.

So that was put up very soon, and it's still there. It's still a site of prayer for people at Ground Zero and it's always maintained by the Buddhists who still have a presence in the area. They have a temple on Bainbridge and a lot of people have come to pray and they do peace walks every August.

Spirit: *What are the peace walks?*

Douglass: They start out at various places, such as Austin and Hanford, and they walk across the state of Washington on foot, the whole way chanting for peace. And they stop and talk about the nuclear arms race and people will listen. So it's a way of raising consciousness and a way of praying at the same time. They arrive at the base on whatever day has been picked, usually around Hiroshima and Nagasaki day as the action day. So that goes on every year.

[*Editor:* The 2015 Interfaith Peace Walk began on July 26, 2015, in Salem, Oregon, and finished several hundred miles later at Ground Zero on August 10..]

Spirit: *Jim told me that the Peace Pagoda has been given the green light?*

Douglass: We don't know yet for sure and we have varying perspectives on how likely this is. Various people think differently about how likely this is to happen.

Spirit: *What do we know for sure?*

Douglass: Well, what has happened for sure is that there is a renewed proposal to try and build the Peace Pagoda at Ground Zero again, a much smaller one than the original proposal. And the Ground Zero community met and formed a committee and studied the issue and talked it through and decided that they did want to go through with building a pagoda at Ground Zero. But as far as I know, no one has yet applied for any kind of permit, which is, of course, where we ran into the problem before.

Berkeley Officials Act as Cheerleaders for the Developers in Adeline Corridor Planning Process

by Carol Denney

To start with, the consultants are pretty funny. I opted not to sign in and put on a nametag at the "Community Visioning Workshop" in Berkeley on August 29, and it drove them mad. They kept surrounding me like a bunch of bees encouraging me to wear a name tag and sign in, and I kept declining politely, knowing that anything I filled out would be ultimately used in metrics against a neighborhood I loved.

They would boast about the turnout even if half the room was consultants, volunteers, and kids from local organizations getting credit for being there.

And after only being allowed to say positive things about the Adeline Corridor in guided workshop after guided survey after guided visioning committee, a report will be produced that says, "98 percent of the response was *positive*."

One of them finally filled out a name tag *for* me and walked purposefully toward me across the room offering to put it on me. I declined that, too, and not even because it was somebody else's name.

But the funniest person there by far was new interim Berkeley City Manager, Dee Williams-Ridley, who wanted people to shout good morning like a bunch of kindergartners until she was satisfied with the volume. They were all pretty good sports about it. But she wouldn't quit.

She had a whole speech planned about how "you can't play a symphony alone," asking what kind of music we liked — jazz? rap? blues? It's an old trick: no matter how annoyed an audience is with this kind of thing, if you can trick them into making a sound, or raising a hand, or clapping along, they end up remembering it later as *positive*.

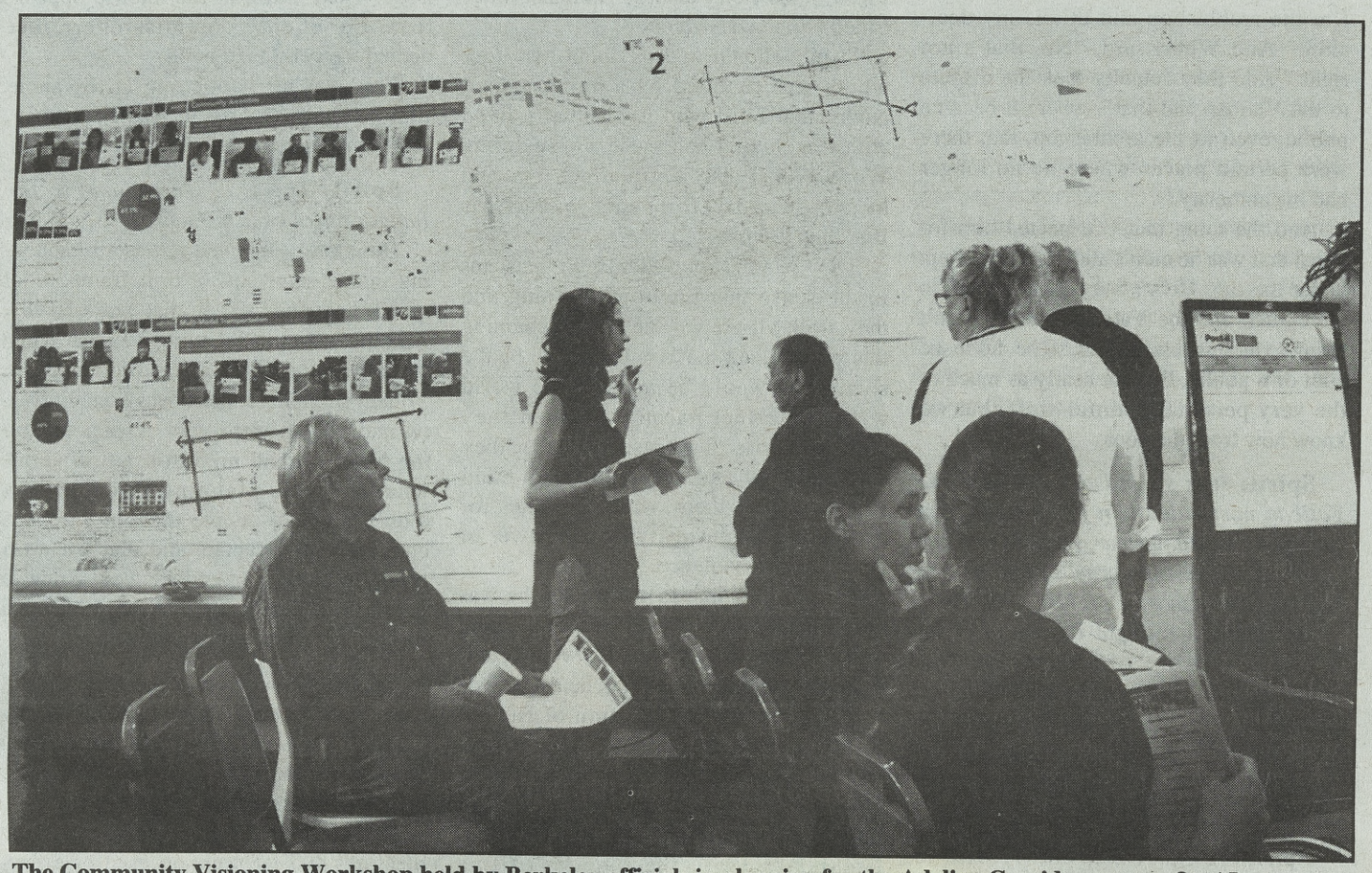
They might think they played a role in developing the plan, and if later, after actually filling out surveys and writing essays and mapping things with crayons, they point out that the plan doesn't at all resemble what they wanted, the developers get to point out that *at least they played a role*.

Williams-Ridley said, "you're writing your own song" and "you are getting ready to write your own song" so many times, I started to write a song about it. She kept trying to drive up the energy with cheap tricks, such as: "Why do you love Berkeley?" "What's stopping you?" "Repeat after me; I will not stop until my song is written!" in a room that was ready to burst into song, alright, just not the song she wanted.

She finally acknowledged that people had a lot of distrust. She was told directly that people wouldn't trust her, and she asked repeatedly for people to go easy on her, to *give her a chance*, which was so pathetic we were ready to hold hands and folkdance if she would just shut up. And then she said, "Will you give our city staff a chance?" — *and the room went dead.*

This is Berkeley, after all, not a bunch of kindergartners. Even Berkeley kindergartners are ahead of this game. The truth is that nobody should trust the city staff or Dee Williams-Ridley, either, as Mayor Tom Bates' representative.

She stated that "the basis of trust is authenticity," which I found puzzling. The basis of trust has nothing to do with authenticity, whatever that is, and when it comes to the city of Berkeley, trust has much more to do with transparency, sadly in short supply these days, and the pattern of previous behavior which, in the case of the Adeline Corridor, is the usual raw skidmark of greed.



The Community Visioning Workshop held by Berkeley officials in planning for the Adeline Corridor. Carol Denney photo

City officials galvanized extraordinarily united opposition by blithely planning to build and displace the beloved Ashby Flea Market, and more recently altered the district's land use controls to favor tax-base-enhancing automobile sales uses, the obvious enemy of small, pedestrian-serving businesses that make the Adeline Corridor such a shopable, walkable neighborhood.

The City of Berkeley has blown off decades of opportunities to listen to its citizens and has opted for big developer, corporate, and university perspectives every time. While protesters in San Francisco's Mission District have stopped at least two out-of-scale luxury housing developments, Berkeley's best-educated and best-organized have yet to stop or even scale back the pet project of a former planning director which distorts a landmark building in an historic setting, mars an iconic view from the Campanile, exacerbates the housing crisis with 18 stories of luxury housing, kills off the current building's theaters (with a lot of cat-and-mouse games regarding their replacement), displaces valued businesses and will require years, perhaps a decade, of disruptive construction.

Berkeley citizens have no track record on which to base any trust in a process dedicated to using their own dutiful participation in surveys designed to grease the path for their own exploitation — "98% found the process positive!" and "98% enjoyed the cookies!" — since after they slog through the monotonous "only positive remarks" free association exercises, the only options offered for suggestions have to be for immediate physical improvements to actual spaces on maps.

Once a few play areas and bike paths are thrown into the mix, whoever is left will probably sign off on more developer "flexibility" just to get the hell out of there. One person shouted "This is corporate BS!" at some point, but the event was extremely civil, considering what's at stake.

Attendee Rinna Flohr, owner of Expressions Gallery on Ashby in Berkeley, was hazy about the benefits of an Arts District, but looked forward to any specific recognition which might improve awareness about arts in the area through signage or advertising. Local resident Lois Fischer characterized many of the residents she knew in the room as "concerned" about the planning process, many of them longtime residents.

There was nothing about rent control or vacancy decontrol. Nothing about locally owned businesses or business opportunities and absolutely nothing about the racism hovering over both the history of the area and a room filled with primarily white planners and city staff and primarily black residents in a rapidly whitening, gentrifying area.

There was a brief admission regarding the extreme decrease in the black population, but nothing about Black Lives Matter. Nothing about police who think camouflage outfits help them blend in with picket fences.

"The basis of trust is authenticity — and I am authentic!" If Interim City Manager Dee Williams-Ridley is authentic, whatever that is, what a lovely thing that must be for her and for anybody who had concerns about her provenance. But it's not about her.

The Lorin District survived being initially excluded from Berkeley's boundaries in 1878, the severe disruption of BART construction in 1970s, and has more economic resilience, community connection, and many other measurable attributes which the City of Berkeley could learn from *if the City were interested.*

Here's the good news:

Great transit! The Adeline Corridor is served by bus, by BART, and a short distance from both I-80 and the Bay Bridge. People in the hills may have the swanky views, but they have to battle it out on absurdly constricted roads through a sea of Mercedes to commute or get some eggs. And the views from West and South Berkeley are still pretty impressive.

Diversity! This isn't the fake diversity so popular among groups that sigh with relief when one black person sits in the corner of their meeting. This is the real thing, the area where African Americans excluded by racial covenants and race-based redlining east of what was once Grove Street (now Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Way) could buy property, start businesses, have families, and build the connections and resources that keep a real neighborhood humming and help to sidestep homelessness. Around 25 percent of the population in the Adeline Corridor is African American, as opposed to only 10 percent across the rest of the city.

Walkability! What the planning consultants call "the walk score" is 89 in the Adeline Corridor, as opposed to only 79 for Berkeley as a whole. This means many errands can be accomplished on foot, unlike the whoops-out-of-butter emergencies for people with gold-plated views.

Stable vacancy and occupancy rates! Vacancies along the Adeline Corridor are lower than both Downtown Berkeley (11.2 percent) and the Telegraph Avenue area (12.7 percent) since the vacancies (7.2 percent) are "absorbed at roughly the same rate" as businesses leave, making for a stable, neighborhood-serving business community.

This is noteworthy since BART construction disrupted the area for years, burdening local businesses. But let's not be stupid. If the property owners on Telegraph and in the downtown lowered their rents, they could lower the vacancies in a New York minute. They would just have to give up on their dreams of getting New York rents.

Got density? The population density (25 people per acre) is *two and a half times greater* than that of Berkeley overall (10 people per acre). This is a crucial point, because "enhancing density" is used as the excuse for imposing tall, ugly blocks of chicken-coop housing along transit corridors, an excuse which residents can point out is not called for in this area.

Planners, developers, and consultants have no excuse for imposing out-of-scale monster buildings here. They should be on their knees examining how over the years this area, naturally and organically, achieved such a radical degree of density without sacrificing its skyline, without abandoning its culture, without losing its identity, and *without selling out to planners, developers, and consultants.*

Got kids? Got work? This, the historic Lorin District, has a higher percentage of children compared with the rest of the city. 70 percent of the Lorin District is in the workforce, although the median income is lower than for most of the City

See **Adeline Corridor Planning** *page 15*

Urban Shield

Protesters Confront Police Militarization

from page 2

eral grant to the Alameda County Sheriff's Department, it does *not* fund the pay, including overtime, of city and county agencies participating in these exercises, which commit substantial amounts in overtime pay not covered by UASI grants.

Sheriff's Department sergeants and deputies cost about $81-$97 per hour for overtime. For 48-hour continuous exercises on the weekend by teams of eight and more staff, this cost alone is significant: at least $34,000.

In 2012, activists in Oakland began organizing to push back against Urban Shield, which had been headquartered at the city-run Marriott Hotel in downtown Oakland. They formed a coalition of organizations, including American Friends Service Committee, Critical Resistance, War Resisters League, Arab Resource Organizing Center, Oscar Grant Committee, CodePink, Oakland Privacy Working Group, and others, as well as families of people killed by police.

The coalition organized street protests at the Marriott, joined by a feeder march by families of police murder victims.

Last year, protests were energized by the response in Ferguson, Missouri, to the killing of Michael Brown. Buddhists sat in engaged meditation in front of the Marriott Hotel's doors. Congresswoman Barbara Lee reportedly urged then-Mayor Jean Quan to cancel the contract to host the event in Oakland. After all, Oakland has a policy against gun-selling in its jurisdiction. Why should it then sponsor an event for vendors to sell military gadgetry?

Mother Jones magazine published an extensive report on Urban Shield, after its reporter was thrown out by Urban Shield's media flacks.

Ultimately, Oakland did kick out Urban Shield. In response, the Sheriff's Department moved the event this year to the county fairgrounds in suburban Pleasanton. A Pleasanton police officer only recently killed John Deming, Jr., an unarmed young man in July.

Joined by more groups this year, including Black Alliance for Just Immigration and the Mount Diablo Justice and Peace Center, the coalition in a short period organized teach-ins in Walnut Creek and Oakland, as well as a surprise drop of a banner over Interstate 680 in Pleasanton, that read "War Games in Pleasanton?"

The centerpiece event was a protest on the first day of Urban Shield, on September 11, part of a contest over the meaning of terror, who is impacted, and how to respond. Marching through downtown Oakland to the Alameda Sheriff's office, theater groups occupied street intersections and enacted repression by police of Black, Filipino, Mexican and Arab communities and their responses. Oakland police stayed away.

In powerful testimony in the shadow of the Sheriff's office on Lakeside Drive, a local 13-year-old girl described a SWAT raid on her home. "As soon as I hit the door, I opened it, and they started screaming at me, telling me to put my hands up. Pointing rifles at me. And I look around, and it seemed like a movie. I couldn't believe it." She was brave beyond words to describe her experience in public.

Alameda County should not be hosting this large event, which involves not only nine Bay Area counties, but teams from beyond the Bay Area and the United States. But neither should individual city agencies participate in an exercise that militarizes emergency responses and ordinary policing. Our communities badly need other kinds of security, instead of fortifying the state's violent responses to protest and crisis.

On September 29, activists spoke against Urban Shield at a meeting of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, while also opposing the Sheriff's proposed use of federal UASI funds to acquire new phone surveillance equipment. The contract with Harris Corporation would prohibit the county from disclosing even what the equipment is — a non-disclosure agreement imposed in other cities for use of the "Stingray."

Stingray technology mimics the signal from a cell phone tower to capture data from all cell phones within a wide area. In a small victory for activists, the Board of Supervisors postponed their decision on the Harris contract to allow more time for public input.

John Lindsay-Poland is the Wage Peace Coordinator for American Friends Service Committee in San Francisco. He can be reached at jlindsay-poland@afsc.org. Thanks to researchers who contributed to this article, including Dalit Baum and Mike Katz-Lacabe.

"Humanize Not Militarize," a new poster exhibit by the AFSC, shows the effects of military violence in foreign and domestic settings.

Adeline Corridor Planning Process

from page 14

of Berkeley, where only 60 percent are in the workforce.

Car free rate!32 percent of people in the Adeline Corridor area are car-free, unlike 25 percent of Berkeley citywide, which is mighty green. *So why is the city messing with the Adeline Corridor?*

They're not coy about it. Planners, developers and the consultants they lunch with want to build what they build everywhere else: out-of-scale, fake-affordable, UC-dorms-whoops-we-meant-housing-units that make developers sing arias and neighborhoods wince.

The planners and politicians want to deliver the goods to their best donors, and the donor-developers want "vacant parcels and surface parking lots" they've pretty much run out of or cost more in other parts of town.

Consultant Mukul Malhotra of MIG's planning and consulting staff, referred to "enhancing" the zoning restrictions, and any public discussion of that will come long after the bike paths and play areas have loosened up whoever is left — if discussion comes at all.

They are hoping what all planners and developers hope: that if they scatter some park-lets, bike lanes and play structures around, they can keep people in the area singing hallelujah long enough to loosen the zoning restrictions, limber up the height restrictions and land use controls, and "create opportunities" for themselves which apparently don't exist right now or aren't quite as lucrative as some tweaks in a planning process will make them down the road.

Right now is already here. Max Anderson, who represents the district on the City Council and is one of the founders of Friends of the Adeline Corridor, commented at a recent community meeting that the planning department is "forging ahead with development projects without consulting the community" and suggested a "moratorium on development" until a plan is ready.

Suffice it to say that a "moratorium on development" will not be on any checkbox at the next "Community Visioning Workshop."

Berkeley officials could have had a different speech instead of the "you can't play a symphony alone" speech, which was pretty flat by symphonic standards. They could have said, hey, we want to stop the gentrification of this historically black area, put the brakes on homelessness, and get some common sense into what has up to now been a planning process which only benefits the wealthy. *What are your ideas?*

It's a question they can still ask.

Modern Times

by George Wynn

I know it's futile to do
what I do: daydreaming
traveling back in time
in my imagination
a coin collector
holding on to
his precious coins

What I can't get over
is the modern skyscraper
world and technology
is not for me
How can I practice
mindfulness
when people bump
into me so absorbed
in their smart phones
as if they will never
look up again

It's either drones or smart phones
good news is so hard to find

Youth Spirit Artworks: *More Than a Paintbrush*

from page 1

work, with its inviting array of clean paintbrushes and working tables, is guided by the youth themselves.

"We want to reverse the top-down model," says Gibbins. "If they want to do more products, more T-shirts, it comes out of their discussions every Friday."

The young participants, who range from 16 to 25 years of age, check in together every week to make decisions about their projects, ranging from fine arts, spoken word, and writing projects such as the "Beyond This Prison" letter-writing project which began as correspondence between Louisiana inmate Glen Robinson and Berkeley resident J. R. Furst. The young artists also pursue the opportunities and challenges of larger community art projects, entrepreneurship opportunities, and product sales.

The youth can earn money directly through their sales of artistic products, as well as by applying for progressively focused work opportunities using a variety of skills, such as keeping track of sales data, assisting with communication and media, and project management, earning more as they shoulder more responsibility.

The money they earn is theirs. They've seen what can happen with a particularly popular T-shirt: people walk in off the street requesting it, it flies off the shelves, and YSA can run out of stock entirely.

"It helps them become more independent and learn to budget," explains Gibbins. "They have the freedom to do what they want."

YSA's mission is to use art jobs and jobs training to transform the lives of low-income and homeless youth to ensure that they meet their full potential, which often has more to do with self-confidence and emotional clarity than the art itself.

Many of the participants don't come into the program thinking of themselves as artists at all. When they leave the program, they often have a very different view of themselves and their talents, whether they see themselves as artists or not.

"They discover that with hard work they can do anything," states Gibbins simply, as Li nods in agreement. "They learn to ask for help. Art is just a medium through which they learn."

The community organizations working in partnership with Youth Spirit Artworks comprise a long list. Participants learn about the program largely through word of mouth in the community.

YSA murals and mosaics spring to life throughout the town of Berkeley and young people either see it for themselves or hear about it from friends and teachers at local schools, or groups like YEAH (Youth Engagement, Advocacy and Housing) and BOSS (Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency).

YSA has a partnership with Urban Adamah, a community garden on San Pablo Avenue where youth can harvest eggs, learn about plants and farming, and see the skills required to organize with others — literally from the ground up.

Respected local artists and poets conduct workshops with the participants, and the youth take field trips that engender discussions they may never have had before about college requirements, job skills, and possibilities for a future some have never had the encouragement to envision for themselves.

There is no template for an original model. In the eight years of YSA's existence, the best practices of youth empowerment organizations with similar goals have informed the program, but YSA is original as an organization. It partners with local artists and has a dedicated and deeply educated staff, but it is designed by the youth themselves, who move seamlessly through the studio in ways that convey connection and respect.

YSA staff Lia Li and Danielle Gibbins in front of the Malcolm X Elementary School mural in Berkeley. Carol Denney photo

"They love to sing," says Gibbins. "There's a lot of community organizing," she adds, and mentions contributions from the Juice Bar Collective that quickly became favorites, even to some of the youth who were initially more used to junk food.

"It's hard to quantify the value of hope — and resilience," Gibbins says. The need to measure the youths' progress has inspired efforts to try some testing, but the point is well taken.

How do you measure what happens to someone who walks through a museum, or who is suddenly given not just the opportunity to paint a chair, but to use their own judgment about the design and the colors? What happens to a young mind when their personal vision or expression, played across a T-shirt, catches peoples' fancy and sells like crazy?

Art, poetry, and music have always been the first programs cut in most school budgets, so many young people have no idea what transformative power the arts can have unless they have personal family or friends who can make the introduction.

But YSA's comprehensive approach to personal transformation is wider than any paintbrush, and more lasting than any song, especially coupled with the serious requirements of budgeting for community projects and creating media for community events.

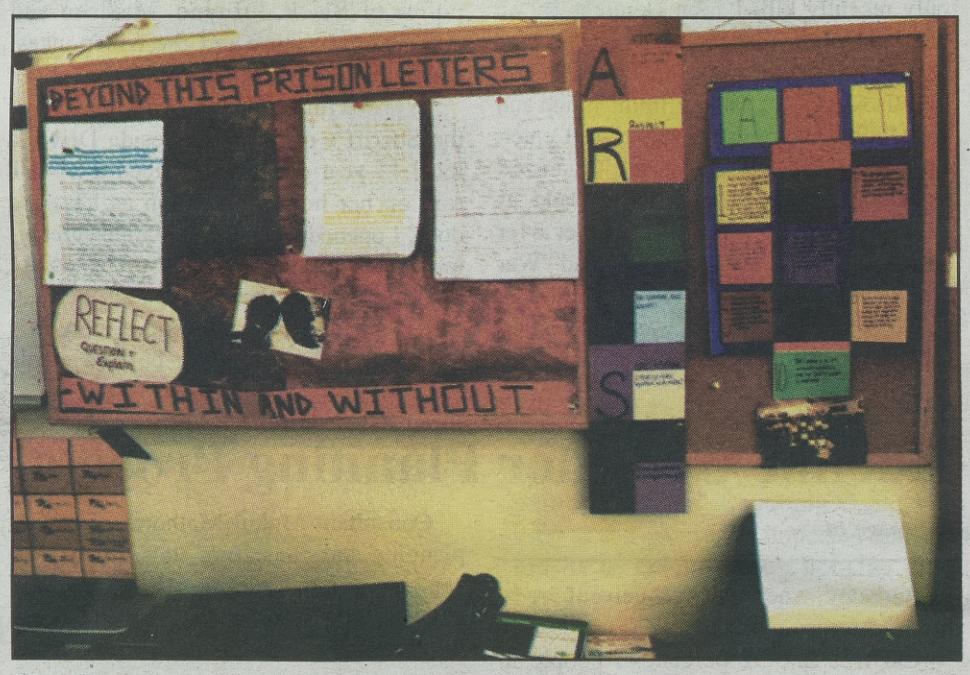
Its greatest source of support is still personal donations, a supportive board, and community connections through its work, which seems perfectly situated in a South Berkeley neighborhood with an impressive balance of retail stores, arts groups, and cooperatives.

"Art is a piece of it," says Gibbins, "but there's so much critical thinking and creativity."

The grounded nature of YSA's effort shows in its young participants, such as Jason, who has been involved for three years. He shows his work if requested with quiet confidence and pride, and if complimented on his considerable skill as a draftsman, he simply smiles and says yes, as though there is clarity in his own mind that should he elect to work in the arts arena, he has the required skills.

On a recent Friday afternoon, the corner of Ellis and Alcatraz Avenue in Berkeley came alive with Youth Spirit Artwork leaders, GHA Design representatives, Ecology Center organizers, UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design students, Climate Action Coalition partners and other local groups who collected input from the community about building a "parklet" or "artlot."

A painted chair in the front window of Youth Spirit Artworks. Carol Denney photo



The "Beyond This Prison" letters writing project wall at YSA. Carol Denney photo

There were drinks and snacks, and large informational signs about the project, and everywhere you looked, there were lots of creative, structural models of different sizes and shapes clustered around the curbs to help get people thinking about possibilities. Small groups chatted, strolled, and brainstormed together in the sun.

Youth Spirit Artworks worked with 144 young people last year alone, an impressive, unmistakable metric which prospective donors can contemplate along with the distinctive visual projects.

These are 144 young people who potentially have a better sense of who they are, a better sense of their worth in the world, improved skills for job interviews, and even a resume.

It might not be the easiest thing to measure. It's a lot like the rush of possibilities people sense once they're exiting a great exhibit at a museum or art exhibition. It's much more than a paintbrush.